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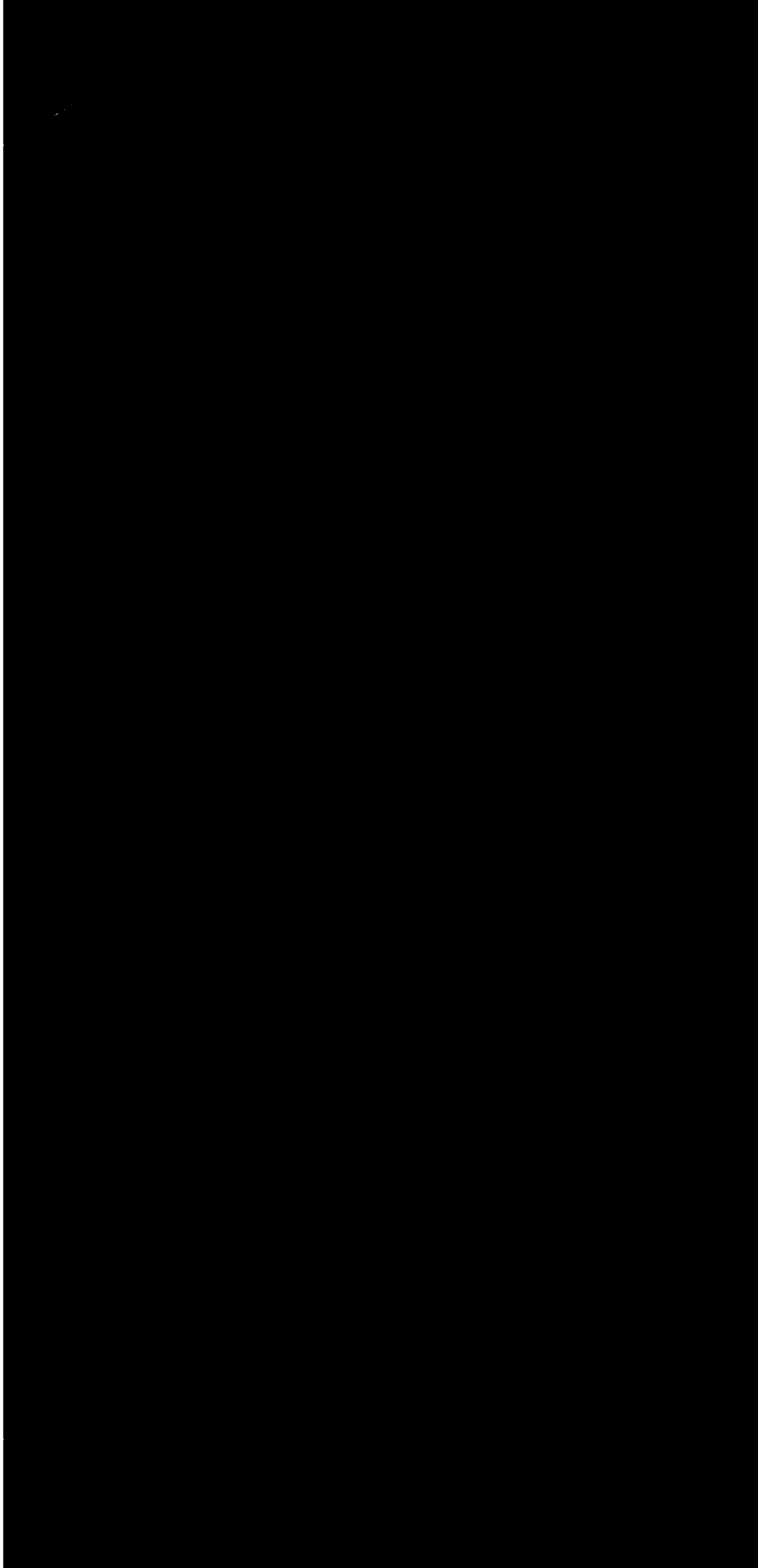
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ENGLISH COMEDY:

A

COLLECTION

OF THE

MOST CELEBRATED DRAMAS,

SINCE THE

COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

REFORMATION OF THE STAGE

BY

SIR RICHARD STEELE AND COLLEY CIBBER.

VOL. I.

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THE object of the present Publication is so distinctly, although briefly stated in the Title Page, as to leave further explanation unnecessary. On the wit and talent with which the performances of Farquhar, Centlivre, and Congreve are replete, it is needless to enlarge; but the reasons must be obvious, why many will be gratified by being able to possess, or to present to others, the successful Comedies of Cumberland, of Murphy, of Cowley, and of Sheridan, detached from those of earlier date.

CONTENTS.



THE PROVOKED HUSBAND.....	<i>Cibber</i>	Page 1
THE JEALOUS WIFE.....	<i>Colman</i>	95
THE WEST INDIAN.....	<i>Cumberland</i>	181

**THE
PROVOKED HUSBAND;**

OR,

A JOURNEY TO LONDON;

A COMEDY.

BY

SIR J. VANBRUGH AND COLLEY CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD TOWNLY.
SIR F. WRONGHEAD.
MR. MANLY.
'SQUIRE RICHARD.
COUNT BASSET.
MR. LUTESTRING.
POUNDAGE.
JOHN MOODY.
JAMES.
CONSTABLE.
WILLIAMS.

LADY TOWNLY.
LADY GRACE.
LADY WRONGHEAD.
MISS JENNY.
MRS. MOTHERLY.
MYRTILLA.
TRUSTY.

THE PROVOKED HUSBAND.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Lord Townly's Apartment.

LORD TOWNLY, *solus*.

WHY did I marry?—Was it not evident, my plain, rational, scheme of life was impracticable with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?—Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation—That—I have no reason to believe, is in question—But then, how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking consideration! and her presumption, while she keeps it, insupportable! for, on the pride of that single virtue, she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birthright prerogative of a woman of quality.—Amazing! that a creature, so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and, while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch, is left at large, to take care of his own contentment—'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there

shall be—Yet, let me not be rash—Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproached, grow more untractable—Here she comes—Let me be calm a while.

Enter LADY TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lady T. Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

Lord T. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady T. Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord T. It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady T. Comfortable! And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband!—Lord, what notions of life some men have!

Lord T. Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

Lady T. Yes, my lord, when the tame doves live cooped within the pen of your precepts, I do think them prodigious indeed!

Lord T. And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray what must the world think of them then?

Lady T. Oh, this world is not so ill bred, as to quarrel with any woman for liking it.

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, a husband so well bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it; in short, the life you lead, madam——

Lady T. Is to me the pleasantest life in the world,

Lord T. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady T. Why, whom would you have her please?

Lord T. Sometimes her husband.

Lady T. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord T. Certainly.

Lady T. Why, then we are agreed, my lord—For if I never go abroad, till I am weary of being at home—(which you know is the case)—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home, till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord T. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady T. Don't let it be long a coming then, for I am in haste.

Lord T. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady T. Before I know the question?

Lord T. Pshaw!—Have I power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady T. You have.

Lord T. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady T. Sincerely.

Lord T. Now then, recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me.

Lady T. You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord T. I think I have a right to it.

Lady T. Why, then, my lord, to give you at once a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint, that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord T. How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady T. Oh, my lord, my lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord T. Name one.

Lady T. Fifty, if you please—To begin, then—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet—invite them to dinner—appoint them a party in the stage-box, at the play—engross the conversation

—call them by their christian names—tell them the players: from thence, jump into the carriage for the supper at an India House—give the waiter a guinea: do that, toast a pretty fellow; then jump again to this end of the town—break, with the ladies, into an assembly—crowd to the hazard-table—throw a familiar levant upon some sharp, lurching fellow of quality, and, if he demands his money, turn short with a loud laugh, and cry, you'll owe it him, to-morrow, ha! ha!

Lord T. Prodigious!

[Aside]

Lady T. These, now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife from that of a single woman.

Lord T. Dea, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife than in an unmarried woman?

Lady T. Why, the strongest law in the world, custom—custom, time out of mind, my lord.

Lord T. Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but I shall never govern me.

Lady T. Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to obey the laws of prudence.

Lord T. I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady T. You shall have one this moment, my lord: for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why, she'll go abroad till he comes to himself again. • [Going]

Lord T. Hold, madam; I am amazed you are not more uneasy at the life we lead. You don't want to leave me, and yet seem void of all humanity; for, with a heart I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady T. Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I am a selfish creature.

Lord T. What is it I have done to you? What can I be so much to blame of?

Lady T. Oh, nothing, in the least! 'Tis true, you

have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher an hundred pounds, these three weeks ; but what then ? a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know ; and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him ? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord T. By heaven, if my whole fortune, thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady T. That is, my lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord T. No, madam ; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine ; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it—Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home—at least, it shall not be my fault, if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred—and now, madam——

Lady T. And now, my lord, down to the ground, I thank you.

Lord T. If it be no offence, madam——

Lady T. Say what you please, my lord ; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

Lord T. How long, in reason, then, do you think that sum ought to last you ?

Lady T. Oh, my dear, dear lord, now you have spoiled all again ! how is it possible I should answer for an event, that so utterly depends upon fortune ? But to show you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away, I have a strong possession, that, with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord T. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady T. Oh, the churl! ten thousand: what! not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!—Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit,—she—she might lose them all again.

Lord T. And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure, that were the last you would lose.

Lady T. Well, my lord, to let you see I design to play all the good housewife I can; I am now going to a party at quadrille, only to trifle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Duchess of Quite-right. [Exit.

Lord T. Insensible creature! neither reproaches nor indulgence, kindness nor severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!—But how to cure it—take my friend's opinion—Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter WILLIAMS.

Wil. Mr. Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord T. They did not deny me?

Wil. No, my lord.

Lord T. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Wil. Lady Grace is here, my lord. [Exit.

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady G. A huge folio, that has almost killed me—I think I have half read my eyes out.

Lord T. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady G. That's true; but any body's thoughts are better than always one's own; you know.

Lord T. Who's there?

Enter WILLIAMS.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr. Manly. *[Exit WILLIAMS.]*

Lady G. And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

Lord T. I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady G. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord T. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shows, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady G. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord T. Look you, my grave Lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady G. I can't help that.

Lord T. Ha! you can't help it, ha! ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable.

Lady G. Pooh, you tease one, brother!

Lord T. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady G. If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

Lord T. Well—there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it—But, in short, I find by his conversation of late, he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady G. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord T. Oh, that's the last thing he'll do! he'll never make you an offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady G. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord T. Not directly—but that imports nothing; he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me: which, as yet, notwithstanding our friendship, I have neither declined, nor encouraged him to.

Lady G. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me; you know he has a satirical turn, but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue. and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord T. You are right, child; when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

Lady G. Hush! he's here——

Enter MR. MANLY.

Manly. My lord, your most obedient.

Lord T. Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Manly. Then I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands—What, only you two!—How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company! A brother and sister, soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding; I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St. James's.

Lady G. Fie, fie, Mr. Manly, how censorious you are!

Manly. I had not made the reflection, madam, but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

Lord T. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Manly. Then I won't try, my lord.

Lord T. But, 'tis probable, I may hear of her by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Manly. Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord T. Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out, for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Manly. Why, then, my lord, since you oblige me to proceed—I have often thought that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady G. Bless me!

Lord T. My treatment!

Manly. Ay, my lord; you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband; and so, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where

she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself.—And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord T. Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power.

Manly. However, since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations: if that don't work——drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her——to breakfast upon them.

Lord T. You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend, in our anxiety!

Manly. Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady G. Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord T. With all my heart.

Lady G. Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly?

Manly. Apropos—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind——

Lord T. Pray, let us have it.

Manly. Do you know that your country neighbour, and my wise kinsman, Sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town, with his whole family?

Lord T. The fool! what can be his business here?

Manly. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you——No less than the business of the nation.

Lord T. Explain.

Manly. He has carried his election—against Sir John Worthland.

Lord T. The deuce! What! for—for——

Manly. The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord T. A proper representative, indeed!

Lady G. Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him?

Manly. You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady G. Was not that he, that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

Manly. The same.

Lady G. Pray what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Manly. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a year; though, as it was left him saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money make such a bawling about his ears, that at last he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament man.

Lord T. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Manly. And with this politic prospect, he is now upon his journey to London——

Lord T. What can it end in?

Manly. Pooh! a journey into the country again.

Lord T. Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, till the session is over?

Manly. If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

Lord T. How so?

Manly. Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote

in the whole town, besides the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord T. Then he has made a fine business of it indeed.

Manly. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady G. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Manly. No, madam; I would only spoil his project to save his fortune.

Lady G. How are you concerned enough to do either?

Manly. Why—I have some obligations to the family, madam: I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which Sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. [To MANLY.] Sir, here is one of your servants, from your house, desires to speak with you.

Manly. Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord T. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

[*Exit WILLIAMS.*]

Enter JAMES.

Manly. Well, James, what's the matter?

James. Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says Sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Manly. Where is he?

James. At our house, sir: he has been gaping and stumping about the streets, in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he may have a good lodging for a parliament man, till he

can hire a handsome whole house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Manly. I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

Lord T. Pr'ythee let us have him here; he will divert us.

Manly. Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady G. I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Manly. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[*Exit JAMES.*]

Lady G. Pray what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Manly. Oh! his *maitre d' hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes——his companion.

Lord T. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public in his own county.

Manly. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at——sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady G. And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too?

Manly. That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her than she yet knows of: and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse had made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille in the parish of St. James's.

Lord T. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money ; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Manly. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team !

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John !

Moody. Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly ! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me your hand ! Why, that's friendly naw. Flesh ! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, measter?—Good lack ! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

Lord T. Mr. Moody, your servant : I am glad to see you in London : I hope all the good family is well.

Moody. Thanks be praised, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady G. I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody.

Moody. Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour : there's money enough stirring now.

Manly. What has been the matter, John ?

Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Manly. Come, tell us all.

Lord T. Come, let us sit down. [They take chairs.

Manly. Pray how do they travel ?

Moody. Why, i'the awld coach, measter ; and 'cause my lady loves to do things handsom, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapped to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to

London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postillion.

Manly. Very well! The journey sets out as it should do. [*Aside*] What, do they bring all the children with them too?

Moody. Noa, noa, only the younk.'squire, and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half a crown a head, a week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dung-hill farm.

Manly. Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

Moody. Anon, sir.

[*Not understanding him.*]

Lord T. And when do you expect them here, John?

Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an it had no' been that th' awld weazlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut-lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we could set things to rights again.

Manly. So they bring all the baggage with the coach then?

Moody. Ay, ay, and good store on it there is—Why, my lady's geer alone were as much as filled four port-mantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Lord T.

Lady G.

Manly.

} Ha! ha! ha!

Lady G. Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

Moody. Why there's my lady, and his worship; and the younk 'squire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lapdog, and my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe the cook, that's all—Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady G. Oh, I see them! I see them go by me.
Ha! ha! [Laughing.]

Moody. Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boiled beef——And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made th' awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say.

Manly. Ay, and well out on't again, John.

Moody. Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I——Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin we turned our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us aw the day lung. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as tho'f they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, tho'f I told her it was Childermas day.

Manly. These ladies, these ladies, John——

Moody. Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find that the best——when she's mended, won't ha much goodness to spare.

Lord T. Well said, John—Ha! ha!

Manly. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still.

Moody. Ay, ay, much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me; tho' as for her goodness—why, she was willing to come to London, too—But, hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Manly. Why, that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

Moody. Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am—Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak stautly too, sometimes—But then he canno' hawld it—no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord T.

Lady G.

} Ha! ha! ha!

Manly.

Moody. Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has hugey business with you; and will certainly wait upon you, by that time he can put on a clean neckcloth.

Manly. Oh, John, I'll wait upon him!

Moody. Why, you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Manly. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

Moody. Just i' the street next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Manly. A milliner's?

Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly. Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i'th' fore-room.

Manly. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't—Who recommended that house to you, John?

Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for, as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman, that was always riding by our coach side at York races—Count—Basset; aye, that's he.

Manly. Basset! Oh, I remember; I know him by sight.

Moody. Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to—

Manly. As any sharper in town. [Aside.

Moody. Well, measter——

Lord T. My service to Sir Francis, and my lady, John.

Lady G. And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

Moody. Ay, your honours; they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Manly. I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John——

Moody. Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you! [Exit.

Lord T. What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady G. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon, in the country, must be very good company.

Lord T. Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille tables in town, they would lay down their cards, to laugh at you.

Lady G. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But, to let you see that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together, what think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Manly. I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady G. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

Lord T. Say you so, madam? have at you then. Here! get the ombre table and cards. [Exit.

Lady G. Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now.

Manly. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady G. I'm sorry my lord is not here to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us. [Exit.

Manly. It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with

what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation ! How amiable is every hour of her conduct ! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one ! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointment that folly and falsehood ever gave me !

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives ;
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate ;
And only fools would mock the married state.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

Scene I.—Mrs. Motherly's House.

Enter MRS. MOTHERLY and COUNT BASSET.

Count B. I tell you, there is not such a family in England for you. Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy for the winter ?

Mrs. M. Nay, I see nothing against it, sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament man ; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count B. Psha ! Pr'ythee, never trouble thy head ; his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a year.

Mrs. M. Alas-a-day, that's nothing ! your people of ten thousand a year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count B. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Mrs. M. As how?

Count B. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Mrs. M. Say you so?—Why, then I go, sir—and now, pray let's see your game.

Count B. In one word, my cards lieth us—When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Mrs. M. Is this your game? I would not give sixpence for it. What, you have a passion for her pin-money!—No, no, country ladies are not so flush of it!—Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtilla, easy?—Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count B. I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

[Shows it, and puts it up again.]

Mrs. M. Aye, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count B. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me!—You must know, this country knight and his lady bring up with them their eldest son and a daughter——

Mrs. M. Well——

Count B. The son is an unlicked whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school, and begins to hanker after every wench in the family; now, him we must secure for Myrtilla. The daughter, much of the same age; a pert hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be busy in her way too—Now, what do you say to me?'

Mrs. M. Say! why, I shall not sleep for thinking of

it. But, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count B. Pay as we go, I tell you; and the five hundred shall be staked down.

Mrs. M. That's honest——

Enter MYRTILLA.

So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes, madam; but Mr. Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Mrs. M. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know. [*Exit.*

Count B. Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

Count B. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! Suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

Count B. What do you think of the young country 'squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

Count B. Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while, at least to look about you.

Enter MRS. MOTHERLY, in haste.

Mrs. M. Sir! sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count B. What, already?

Mrs. M. They are just getting out!—Won't you step, and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them. [*Exit.*

Count B. And think of what I told you. [*Exit.*

Myr. A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been

not do him; and, for that only reason, I shall
behold of one. But while women are so much
in request.

Dear Mrs. MOTHERLY, showing in LADY W. and
by COUNT BASSET.

Mrs. M. If your ladyship pleases to walk
with me, madam, only for the present, till your
things are got all your things in.

Lady W. Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely
kind, I protest it gives me pain, though, to turn you
from lodging thus.

Count B. No trouble in the least, madam; we
are soon moved; besides, Mrs. Motherly is
my acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Mrs. M. The Count is so well bred, madam, that
he would do a great deal more to accommodate
your ladyship.

Lady W. Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred
woman. [Apart to the Count]

Count B. Oh, madam! she is very much
of quality; she is seldom without them.

Lady W. Are there a good many people of
quality, Mrs. Motherly?

Mrs. M. Now your ladyship is here, madam, I
think there is a house without them.

Lady W. I am mighty glad of that; for, really
people of quality should always live amongst
people of quality.

Count B. 'Twas what one would choose, but
where are the children?—John Moody! say you
to the children!—where are the children?—
where are the children?—Count, children!

Enter SIR FRANCIS, 'SQUIRE RICHARD, and Miss JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count B. Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Psha! how dost do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this.

Count B. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey, that's young hopeful—Why dost not haw, Dick?

'Squire R. So I do, feyther.

Count B. Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

Count B. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, sir, I'm in such a frightful pickle!—

[*Salute.*

Count B. Every dress that's proper must become you, madam—you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better to-morrow, sir.

[*LADY WRONGHEAD whispers* MRS. MOTHERLY, *pointing to* MYRTILLA.

Mrs. M. Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady W. A pretty sort of a young woman—Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place.

[*Salutes* MYRTILLA.

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

'*Squire R.* Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted with her too?

Lady W. You, you clown! stay till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart, my Lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? how should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward?

'*Squire R.* Why, ay, feyther, does mother think, that I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, madam, he would soon gain upon any body.

[*He kisses MYRTILLA.*

'*Squire R.* Lo' you there, mother! and you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady W. Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be so familiar.

'*Squire R.* Why, an I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? Naw you and I, and sistef, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one thirty bone-ace, purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, sir: d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

'*Squire R.* Why, and you woant yo' ma' let it aloane; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll show it him.

'*Squire R.* What, the Humber! Hoy day! why, does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a geam at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

'*Squire R.* Nay, the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grained——

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuffed up in a coach so long

that——Pray, madam——could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, madam.

[*Exeunt MYRTILLA and JENNY.*

'*Squire R.* What, has sister taken her away naw! mess, I'll go and have a little game with them.

[*Exit after them.*

Lady W. Well, Count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thou'st nought to do.

Count B. Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why, ay now, that's hearty!

Mrs. M. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue?

Lady W. If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

[*Exit Mrs. MOTHERLY.*

Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

Count B. Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, madam?

Lady W. Lard, don't mind him! he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, ne'er heed me—I have things to look after.

[*Exeunt LADY WRONGHEAD and COUNT BASSET.*

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Ay, is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

Moody. Aw but a few band-boxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy — But, a plague on him, the

monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph has skawered after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter and the hawnds had had him a month agoe.—But I wish the coach and horses were got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us here, John; therefore I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

Moody. Alas a day, sir, I believe our auld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but howsomdever, we'st ta' the best care we can of um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well, make haste then——

[*MOODY goes out, and returns.*]

Moody. Od's flesh! here's Master Monly come to wait upo' your worship!

Sir Fran. Wheere is he?

Moody. Just coming in at threshould.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit MOODY.*]

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Manly. I heard you were come, Sir Francis—and—

Sir Fran. Od's heart! this was so kindly done of you, naw!

Manly. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for, I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, sir?

Manly. Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. Look you, cousin; tho'f I know you wish me well; yet I don't question I shall give you such

weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Manly. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise, (and I ha'n't fawnd yet that I'm a fool) there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Manly. Nay, if you have that secret——

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Manly. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran. In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what at Westminster—that's one thing.

Manly. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not me, as much as it does other folks?

Manly. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! there's it naw! you'll say that I have lived all my days i' the country—what then? —I'm o' the quorum—I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! ay, and at vestry too—and, mayhap, they may find here—that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Manly. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to show that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Manly. That Sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why, ay! there let it lie—

we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—Why, you forget, cousin, Sir John's o' the wrung side, mon!

Manly. I doubt, Sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for, in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again the better.

Manly. And this is the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, cousin, I think it my duty. The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and, since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they sha'n't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Manly. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all, neither——

Manly. You astonish me! what, and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, tho'f I say it—every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Manly. Very well.

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up——

Manly. [*Aside*] And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself——

Manly. Not unlikely.

Sir Fran. Therefore, I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Manly. [*Aside*] Oh, he has taken my breath away ! but I must hear him out.—Pray, Sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court.

Sir Fran. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true ; but she has tongue enough : she woan't be dash't ! Then she shall learn to dance forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still, you know.

Manly. Very well ; but when she is thus accomplished, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin ; for, if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into than they are to get out of—It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Manly. Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions ! But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin ? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the Count and my landlady—I'll call her dawn.

Manly. No, no ; if she's engaged I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odsheart ! but you mun see her naw, cousin : what ! the best friend I have in the world !—Here, sweetheart ! [*To a SERVANT without.*] pr'ythee, desire the lady and the gentleman to come down a bit ; tell her, here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Manly. Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be ?

Sir Fran. You mun know him, to be sure ; why, its Count Basset.

Manly. Oh, is it he !—Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth, I think so too : he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life—Why, here he would go

out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Manly. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Manly. That was happy, indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

Manly. Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan; he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Manly. Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! what a head he has! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. So, here they come.

Enter LADY WRONGHEAD and COUNT BASSET.

Lady W. Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Manly. Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well after your journey.

Lady W. Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Manly. Yet the way of living, here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world, for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady W. Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moped up in the country?

Count B. Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in a quite right light, madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

Manly. Familiar puppy ! [*Aside*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

Count B. Was you at White's this morning, sir ?

Manly. Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count B. Pray——what——was there any thing done there ?

Manly. Much as usual, sir ; the same daily carcasses, and the same crows about them.

Count B. The Demoivre baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Manly. I hope, sir, you had your share of him.

Count B. No, 'faith ; I came in when it was all over——I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady W. What a genteel easy manner he has !

[*Aside.*

Manly. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here. [*Aside.*

Enter 'SQUIRE RICHARD, with a wet Brown Paper on his Face.

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick ; what's the matter with thy forehead, lad ?

'Squire R. I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady W. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature ?

'Squire R. Why, I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room just naw : and so with that they slapped the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out ; so I gut a dab of whet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

Lady W. They served you right enough ; will you never have done with your horse play ?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad ; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

Manly. Yes, truly, his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness ! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—Sir, this is your godson.

'Squire R. Honoured godfeyther ! I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Manly. Thou hast it, child—and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father !

Enter Miss JENNY and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady W. Oh, here's my daughter too ! Miss Jenny, don't you see your cousin, child ?

Manly. And as for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*—may'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother !

Jenny. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Manly. Hah, Miss Pert ! now that's a thought that seems to have been hatched in the girl on this side Highgate ! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady W. That's only from her country education, Sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there, so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Manly. Oh, the best place in the world for it !—every woman she meets will teach her something of it. There's the good gentlewoman in the house looks like a knowing person ; even she, perhaps, will be so good as to show her a little London behaviour.

Mrs. M. Alas, sir, miss won't stand long in need of my instruction !

Manly. That, I dare say—What thou canst teach her, she will soon be mistress of. [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady W. Very obliging, indeed, Mrs. Motherly!

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil, truly!—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Manly. Oh, yes! and very friendly company.

Count B. Humph! I'gad, I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Manly. Well, sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family.

Count B. It's very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see; but it's no matter, we have time enough—[*Aside.*] And so, ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit, and drops a letter.*]

Lady W. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life, but this is no place to examine it.

[*Puts it in her pocket.*]

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Manly. Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey!

Lady W. I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Manly. Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny. And mamma did not come to it, to be idle, sir.

Manly. Nor you neither, I dare sare, my young mistress?

Jenny. I hope not, sir.

Manly. Ha, Miss Mettle!—Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, sir.

Manly. Oh, Sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony!

Sir Fran. Nay, sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant. [Exit MANLY.]

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the Count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud, indeed! but, however, you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady W. Psha! a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late, about money, since you are a parliament man! What, we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs! and then, he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Mrs. M. Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who! cousin Manly?

Lady W. To whom, pray?

Mrs. M. Why, is it possible, your ladyship should know nothing of it!—to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

Lady W. Lady Grace!

Mrs. M. Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers.

Lady W. I don't like that, neither.

Sir Fran. Naw I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady W. [Aside.] If it is not too far gone: at least, it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

Squire R. Pray, feythur, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odso, that's true! step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

Mrs. M. If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to show her where she may have any thing you have a mind to. [Exit.]

Sir Fran. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

'Squire R. Ods flesh ! what, is not it i' the hawse yet ?
—I shall be famished—but hawld ! I'll go and ask Doll,
an' there's none o' the goose poy left.

Sir Fran. Do so—and dost hear, Dick ?—see if there's
e'er a bottle o' the strong beer, that came i' th' coach
with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

'Squire R. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn'a I,
feyther ?

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, as thee and I always drink it for
breakfast—Go thy ways. *[Exit 'SQUIRE RICHARD.]*

Lady W. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fran. Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a
little hungry, after his journey.

Lady W. Nay, e'en breed him your own way—He
has been cramming, in or out of the coach, all this day,
I am sure—I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as
much.

Jenny. Oh, as for that, I could eat a great deal more,
mamma ! but then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like
him, and spoil my shape.

Enter 'SQUIRE RICHARD, with a full Tankard.

'Squire R. Here, feyther, I ha' browght it—it's well
I went as I did ; for our Doll had just baked a toast,
and was going to drink it herself.

Sir Fran. Why, then, here's to thee, Dick !

[Drinks.]

'Squire R. Thonk you, feyther.

Lady W. Lord, Sir Francis, I wonder you can en-
courage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly li-
quor ! it's enough to make him quite stupid !

'Squire R. Why, it never hurts me, mother ; and I
sleep like a hawnd after it. *[Drinks.]*

Sir Fran. I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years,
and, by your leave, madam, I don't know that I want
wit, ha ! ha !

Jenny. But you might have had a better
man. There would have been good fellows
enough there. Daughter, he that is married
has no wit at all.

Jenny. Then I hope I shall marry a fool
to govern, dearly.

Sir Fran. You are too pert, child; it does
become a young woman.

Lord W. Pray, Sir Francis, don't snub her
with her growing spirit, and if you check her
make her as dull as her brother there.

Squire R. [After a long draught.] Indeed, you
think my sister is too forward.

Jenny. You! you think I'm too forward! and
your head's too heavy to think of anything
yourself.

Lord W. Well said, miss! he's none of your
brother, though he is your elder brother.

Squire R. No, nor she shawn't be my mistress,
she's my younger sister.

Sir Fran. Well said, Dick! show them that
liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

Squire R. So I will! and I'll drink agen, for
now I'm in the mood.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Sir Fran. So, John, how are the horses?

Moody. Troth, sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this team,
it's made up o' mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. What's the matter now?

Moody. Why, I'll tell your worship—before we
get on to the street end, with the coach, here, a
bugger-headed cart, with wheels as thick as a brick,
and has poe'd it aw to bits—crack
the perch! and the coach! and whang—
plunge all to the ground. Many upon us, and
would we were aw weel in the country as yet.

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny!—Was Roger in no fault in all this?

Moody. Noa, sir, nor I noither. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster, says he; your meyster may kiss my—and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Odsbud, if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him!

'Squire R. Ay, do, feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud, and so I will!—I will make him know who I am—Where does he live?

Moody. I believe, in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

'Squire R. What! my name?

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

Moody. By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? Odzooks, get me a constable!

Lady W. Pooh, get you a good supper!—Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat, for what can't be

helped. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturned, before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady W. Therefore, see to-morrow if we can buy one at second hand, for present use ; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

Moody. Why, troth, sir, I don't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John ?

Moody. Why, you ha' had it, ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why, then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come, and get off my boots.

[*Exit SIR FRANCIS and MOODY.*]

Lady W. In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes.

[*Exit.*]

Jenny. Yes, mamma, and some for myself too. [*Exit.*]

'Squire R. Ods-flesh ! and what mun I do all alone ?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,

And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

Scene I.—Lord Townly's House.

Enter LORD TOWNLY and WILLIAMS.

Lord T. Who's there ?

Wil. My lord !

Lord T. Bid them get dinner—[*Exit WILLIAMS.*]

Lady Grace, your servant !

Enter LADY GRACE.

Lady G. What, is the house up already?—My lady is not dressed yet.

Lord T. No matter—it's five o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady G. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

Lord T. That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

Lady G. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord T. But, pr'ythee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

Lady G. Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you!—she won a good deal last night.

Lord T. I know no difference, between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady G. However, she is better in good humour, than bad.

Lord T. Much alike: when she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it—when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have a share of her.

Lady G. Well, we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

Lord T. Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady G. I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord T. How so?

Lady G. Why—I have received a letter this morning, that shows him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord T. A letter! from whom?

Lady G. That I don't know; but there it is.

[Gives a letter.]

Lord T. Pray let's see —

[Reads.]

The enclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend, and humble servant, unknown, &c.

Lady G. And this was the enclosed. [Gives another.]
Lord T. [Reads.]

TO CHARLES MANLY, Esq.

Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me, that I now grow as painful to you, as to myself; but, however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did, before I left an honest income, for the vain hopes of being ever yours,

MYRTILLA DUPE.

P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received a shilling from you.

Lady G. What think you now?

Lord T. I am considering——

Lady G. You see it's directed to him?

Lord T. That's true; but the postscript seems to be a reproach, that I think he is not capable of deserving.

Lady G. But who could have concern enough to send it to me?

Lord T. I have observed, that these sort of letters from unknown friends, generally come from secret enemies.

Lady G. What would you have me do in it?

Lord T. What I think you ought to do—fairly show it him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady G. Will not that have a very odd look from me?

Lord T. Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he is innocent, his impatience to appear so, will discover

his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best way of preventing his addresses.

Lady G. But what pretence have I, to put him out of countenance?

Lord T. I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady G. Pray, what is it you do think then?

Lord T. Why, certainly, that it's much more probable, this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concerned in it.

Enter WILLIAMS.

Wil. Mr. Manly, my lord. *[Exit.*

Lord T. Do you receive him, while I step a minute to my lady, *[Exit.*

Enter MANLY.

Manly. Madam, your most obedient—they told me my lord was here.

Lady G. He will be here presently; he is but just gone in to my sister.

Manly. So, then, my lady dines with us?

Lady G. No; she is engaged.

Manly. I hope you are not of her party, madam?

Lady G. Not till after dinner.

Manly. And pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady G. Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my Lady Moonlight. And, from thence, they go together to my Lord Noble's assembly.

Manly. And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady G. Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Manly. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady G. There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Manly. And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Manly. Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady G. What induced you then to be with them?

Manly. Idleness, and the fashion.

Lady G. No mistresses in the case?

Manly. To speak honestly—yes——Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady G. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth.

Manly. Madam!

Lady G. I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly—I don't know a man in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit than yourself: and yet I have a reason in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

Manly. I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the want of an implicit respect for you, is not among the number.—Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

Lady G. Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you. *[Gives him a letter.]*

Manly. To me! I don't remember the hand.

[Reads to himself.]

Lady G. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural. *[Aside.]* Give me leave to tell you one thing, by the way, Mr. Manly; that I should never have shown you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Manly. I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady G. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Manly. I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse ; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

Lady G. I don't believe I shall refuse any, that you think proper to ask.

Manly. Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

Lady G. Enclosed to me in this, without a name.

Manly. If there be no secret in the contents, madam——

Lady G. Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it; but, as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Manly. You'll oblige me, madam.

[*He takes the other letter, and reads.*]

Lady G. [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation ! methinks, our conversation grows terribly critical—This must produce something—Oh lud, 'would it were over !

Manly. Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady G. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Manly. A little patience, madam—First, as to the insinuation you mention——

Lady G. Oh ! what is he going to say now ? [*Aside.*]

Manly. Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late ; yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder, if a great many of those visits are placed to your account : and this taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably, with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady G. My Lady Wronghead!

Manly. Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady G. What view could she have in writing it?

Manly. To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But I hope she is so far mistaken, that, if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady G. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly.

Manly. Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady G. I am sure I have no right to inquire into it.

Manly. Suppose you may not, madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

Lady G. Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But pray, do you suppose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

Manly. Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house, where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla—this letter may have been written by her—But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [Going.]

Lady G. Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Manly. 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady G. Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Manly. Madam, I can neither eat nor rest, till I see an end of this affair.

Lady G. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Manly. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam—then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity.

[*Exit.*

Lady G. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me?—I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side.

Enter MRS. TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Mrs. T. Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

Lady G. How so?

Mrs. T. Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to-day—upon which, my lady said she could not be ready; upon that, my lord ordered them to stay the dinner—and then, my lady ordered the coach—then my lord took her short, and said, he had ordered the coachman to set up—then, my lady made him a great courtesy, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant; but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready.

[*Exit.*

Lady G. Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company.

[*Exit.*

Enter LADY TOWNLY, LORD TOWNLY following.

Lady T. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still, but about my faults—my faults! an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord T. Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady T. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't

mend them—you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord T. And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady T. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to. But, to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction!—Why, but last Thursday, now!—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock this morning before I was able to come to myself again? And then the fault is not mended neither—for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning old lace, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord T. Well, the manner of women's living, of late, is insupportable! and one way or other——

Lady T. It's to be mended, I suppose—why, so it may; but then, my dear lord, you must give one time—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha! ha!

Lord T. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle!

Lady T. Why, then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—but, pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world—my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy, eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other, of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—Faugh!

Lord T. Fie, fie, madam ! is this your way of reasoning ? 'tis time to wake you then—'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often, the ill company that occasion those ill hours.

Lady T. Sure, I don't understand you, now, my lord ; what ill company do I keep ?

Lord T. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it ; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give him fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what to me is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs !

Lady T. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their follies dangerous.

Lord T. Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security ; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages, that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady T. What do you mean ?

Lord T. That women, sometimes, lose more than they are able to pay ; and, if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady T. My lord, you grow scurrilous ; you'll make me hate you ! I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord T. So are the churches—now and then.

Lady T. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord T. Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady T. I see what you drive at all this while ;—you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own

avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord T. Have a care, madam ; don't let me think you value your chastity only, to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious—I, madam, have a reputation too, to guard, that's dear to me, as yours—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy ; but, 'tis his own fault, if ever they render him contemptible.

Lady T. My lord, my lord—you would make a woman mad !

Lord T. Madam, madam, you would make a man a fool !

Lady T. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord T. Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent you making me a beggar at least.

Lady T. A beggar ! Croesus ! I am out of patience !—I won't come home till four, to-morrow morning.

Lord T. That may be, madam ; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady T. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord T. Then, madam, you shall never come home again. [Exit.

Lady T. What does he mean ? I never heard such a word from him in my life before ! The man always used to have manners, in his worst humours.—There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other ; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr. Manly, your servant !

Enter MANLY.

Manly. I ask pardon, for intrusion, madam, but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady T. I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Manly. Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady T. Sir, you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Manly. [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in!
[*Exit.*]

Enter LADY GRACE.

Lady T. Oh, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone, all this while?

Lady G. I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady T. Why, yes; and, therefore, I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a fluster here——

Lady G. Bless me! for what?

Lady T. Only our usual breakfast! we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning—We have been charming company!

Lady G. I am mighty glad of it! sure, it must be a vast happiness, when a man and wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady T. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady G. Now I should be afraid, that, where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady T. Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others.—Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them, for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh next day too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady G. Certainly, that must be vastly pretty!

Lady T. Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day,

for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête à tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side, in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room——At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he——aw——you came home very late last night——'Twas but just turned of two, says I——I was in bed——aw——by eleven, says he——So you are every night, says I——Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late——How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which, we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Lady G. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady T. Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all—A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet! Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

Lady G. Well, certainly, you have the most elegant taste——

Lady T. Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it, this bout; for, it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and he, again—talked something oddly of—turning me out of doors.

Lady G. O, have a care of that!

Lady T. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for it.—But, to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

Lady G. Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady T. Oh, you wicked thing! how can you tease one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that, except giving me money, there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me. And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies—my heart bounds at a ball—and, at an opera—I expire.—Then I love play, to distraction!—cards enchant me—and dice—put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one!—Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady G. Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women—there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it! You see how it makes the men swear and curse! and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why——

Lady T. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady G. Well; and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady T. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady G. Well; and is not that enough to make you forswear play, as long as you live?

Lady T. Oh, yes—I have forsworn it.

Lady G. Seriously?

Lady T. Solemnly!—a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady G. And how can you answer that?

Lady T. My dear, what we say, when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding, than a lover's

oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child, I should not lead you so far into the world ; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady G. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady T. Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is, to me, inconceivable ! for you will marry, I suppose ?

Lady G. I can't tell but I may.

Lady T. And won't you live in town ?

Lady G. Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady T. My stars ! and you would really live in London half the year, to be sober in it ?

Lady G. Why not ?

Lady T. Why, can't you as well go and be sober in the country ?

Lady G. So I would—t'other half year.

Lady T. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments ?

Lady G. A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

Lady T. Oh, of all things, let's hear it.

Lady G. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it, under a great tree ; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend ; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly ; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly ; and, possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.

Lady T. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature ! For, sure, such primitive, antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years—Under a great tree ! Oh, my soul !—But I beg

we may have the sober town scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one !

Lady G. You shall ; and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady T. Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it, however.

Lady G. Why, then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still, it should be soberly ; for, I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though, there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

Lady T. Ay, now for it !

Lady G. I would every day be as neat as a bride.

Lady T. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well, now you are dressed, pray let's see to what purpose ?

Lady G. I would visit—that is, my real friends ; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court ; sometimes, to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille—soberly : I would see all the good plays ; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then, an opera—but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again : and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade ; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly.

Lady T. Well, if it had not been for this last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady G. Why, don't you think, with the further aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner ?

Lady T. Tolerable ! deplorable ! Why, child, all you propose, is but to endure life ; now, I want to enjoy it.

Enter MRS. TRUSTY.

Mrs. T. Ma'am, your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady T. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For, last night, I was poisoned.

Mrs. T. Yes, ma'am; there were some came in this morning. *[Exit.]*

Lady T. My dear, you will excuse me; but, you know, my time is so precious——

Lady G. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady T. You will call on me at Lady Revel's?

Lady G. Certainly.

Lady T. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear!

Lady G. When it does, I will—soberly break from you.

Lady T. Why, then, till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness. *[Exit.]*

Lady G. There she goes!—Dash, into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman, she is really a fine creature! and sometimes infinitely agreeable! nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with; but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost, that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine! Ha, my brother, and Mr. Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of—I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose, but it won't become me to be inquisitive. *[Exit.]*

Enter LORD TOWNLY and MANLY.

Lord T. I did not think my Lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

Manly. No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl

been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

Lord T. Why, I thought you said the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it enclosed to my sister.

Manly. If you please to give me leave, my lord—the fact is thus—This enclosed letter to Lady Grace was a real, original one, written by this girl to the Count we have been talking of; the Count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it—then, only changing the cover, she seals it up, as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me; and, pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

Lord T. Oh, then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own, to you?

Manly. No, my lord; for when I first questioned her about the direction, she owned it immediately; but when I showed her, that her letter to the Count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed, both by the Count and my lady—in short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

Lord T. You are very generous, to be so solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Manly. But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her: for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

Lord T. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Manly. Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure, than your approbation of it.

Lord T. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient till thou art nearer to me; and, as a proof that I have long

wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve, than to ask, my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit; and since, on this occasion, you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure I assure you, we have both succeeded—she is as firmly yours——

Manly. Impossible! you flatter me!

Lord T. I'm glad you think it flattery, but she herself shall prove it none; she dines with us alone:—when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided!

Manly. No more of that, I beg, my lord.

Lord T. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance, how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach, by virtue, what I lost, by love.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

Scene I.—Mrs. Motherly's House.

Enter MRS. MOTHERLY, meeting MYRTILLA:

Mrs. M. So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible story to tell you!

Mrs. M. A story! ods my life! What have you done with the Count's note of five hundred pounds, I sent you about? Is it safe?—Is it good?—Is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe; but for its goodness—— Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it!

Mrs. M. The dickens! has the rogue of a Count played us another trick then?

Myr. You shall hear, madam; when I came to Mr. Cash, the banker's, and showed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the Count, or order, in two months—he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me, claps to the door, and charges me with a constable, for forgery.

Mrs. M. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, till I could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman—and, as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour Mr. Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the Count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme against the Wronghead family, he had drawn us into, to make our fortune.

Mrs. M. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr. Manly my friend; to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr. Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, further, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would give me an ample revenge upon the Count; so that all you have to consider now, madam, is,

whether you think yourself safer in the Count's hands, or Mr. Manly's.

Mrs. M. Nay, nay, child, there is no choice in the matter! Mr. Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, madam, and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the Count done with the ladies?

Mrs. M. Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with miss, as he is with my lady. [*Exit MYRTILLA.*]

Enter SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Mrs. M. Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I shan't stay supper for them, I can tell them that: for, od's heart! I have nothing in me, but a toast and tankard, since morning.

Mrs. M. I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Mrs. M. It is so, indeed, sir.

Sir Fran. But housomever, Mrs. Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country——

Mrs. M. Why, truly, sir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very zealous, that, for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Mrs. M. Oh, the goodness of them! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected, when they come home to their boroughs, after a session, and so beloved—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Mrs. M. Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!—Here's company, sir. [Exit.

Enter MANLY.

Manly. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly!

Manly. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran. Troth, all as busy as bees! I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Manly. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, 'faith, you have hit it, sir!—I was advised to lose no time; so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Manly. Right! that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody—I remember I had heard a wise man say—My son, be bold—so, troth, I introduced myself.

Manly. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—Lookye—Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead, of Bumper Hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; tho'f I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small

encouragement. And tho'f I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet, I believe, you won't say I mist it naw.

Manly. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So, when I found him so courteous—My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony,—why, truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Manly. Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Manly. Very good.

Sir Fran. So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and, as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Manly. So, this was making short on't.

Sir Fran. 'Icod, I shot him flying, cousin! some of you hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Manly. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran. You shall hear, cousin——Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be choosers; but any place, says I, about a thousand a year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thowght it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

Manly. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! there's it! ay, cousin, I see you know the world.

Manly. Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day—Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble—I'll do your business; with that he turned him abawt to somebody with a coloured ribbon across here, that looked, in my thowghts, as if he came for a place too.

Manly. Ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Manly. Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for, just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Manly. Nor I neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune; for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day—You have been since down at the house, I presume?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes; I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Manly. Well; and, pray, what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I can't well tell you what they have done; but I can tell you what I did: and, I think, pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Manly. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate, about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long winded o' both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawsomever, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience—so, when they came to put the ques-

...that about ...
...by a mistake ...
...a good-humoured ...
...I think they call ...
...as I had cried, Ay! gives me ...
...hand—Sir, says he, you are a ...
...a true Englishman! and I should be ...
...acquainted with you—and so ...
...me by the sleeve, along with the crowd ...
...—oh, I knew nowght—but, ods fidd! ...
...wrong side the post—for I were told, after ...
...I should have staid where I was.

...And so, if you had not quite made ...
...before, you have clinched it now!—Ah, ...
...Wrongheads!

...W. [Without.] Very well, very well.

...Mr. Man. Odsso! here's my lady come home

LADY WRONGHEAD, COUNT BASSET, and
JENNY.

...W. Cousin, your servant: I hope you ...
...our rudeness; but we have really been ...
...hurry here, that we have not had ...
...to return your last visit.

...[Oh, madam, I am a man of no great ...
...that has not hindered my coming again.

...W. You are infinitely obliging; but I ...
...with you.

...your own time, madam.

...I will say that for Mr. Manly, ...
...any is the rule of good-breeding ...
...best man in the world.

...I am not to drop my acquaintance ...
...I shall grow more

Count B. I don't know that, sir ; but, I am sure, what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Manly. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with ! [*Aside.*

Lady W. Lard, how ready his wit is ! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Don't you think, sir, the Count's a very fine gentleman ? [*Apart.*

Manly. Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waunds, he'll storm any thing ! [*Apart.*

Manly. Will he so ? Why, then, sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. Ah, you are a wag, cousin ! [*Apart.*

Manly. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you.

Jenny. Oh, perfectly well, sir ! We have been abroad, in our new coach, all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade ; and on Friday to the play ; and on Saturday to the opera ; and on Sunday we are to be at the what d'ye call it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset ; and on Monday we are to see the king ; and so on Tuesday——

Lady W. Hold, hold, miss ! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget ; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Manly. Yes, yes, and she is improved with a vengeance ! [*Aside.*

Jenny. Lawrd, mamma ! I am sure I did not say any harm : and, if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for ought I see.

Lady W. O' my conscience, this girl grows so head-strong——

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you ! Now tack it dawn, an' you can.

Jenny. All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Manly. My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you.

Jenny. Look you there now, madam.

Lady W. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [*Turning away, and pouting.*] I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir!—I know why she does it, well enough——

[*Aside to the Count.*

Count B. Hush, hush, my dear! don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us. [*Aside.*

Jenny. Let her suspect! what do I care?—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she—though, perhaps, I am not so afraid of her.

Count B. [*Aside.*] 'Egad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project, before I can bring it to bear!

Lady W. [*Aside.*] The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it.—Upon my life, Count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count B. Pardon me, madam, I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.—In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her, to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me.. [*Apart.*

Lady W. You are right; I will be more cautious.

[*Apart.*

Count B. To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her. [*Apart.*

Lady W. We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [*Apart.*

Count B. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady W. Jenny! come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Manly. If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled because they are both of a mind. This facetious Count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family! *[Aside.*

Enter MYRTILLA. MANLY *talks apart with her.*

Lady W. Well, Sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News madam! 'Ecod, I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you. A word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a year already.

Lady W. Have you so, sir? And, pray, who may you thank for't? Now, who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

Lady W. Mighty well! Come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fran. Another, child! Waunds! you have had one hundred this morning; pray, what's become of that, my dear?

Lady W. What's become of it! Why, I'll show you, my love. Jenny, have you the bills about you?

Jenny. Yes, mamma.

Lady W. What's become of it? Why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the Count here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, papa, and that would hardly do neither—There's the account.

Sir Fran. [*Turning over the bills.*] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Manly. Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes in to all I proposed to you?

[*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, I'll answer with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir.

[*Apart.*

Manly. I am going home directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and, if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it.

[*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you. [*Apart—Exit.*

Sir Fran. Ods life, madam! here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale.

Lady W. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that, in necessaries for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o' one thing's here that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady W. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion! why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady, in this town, is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady W. Now, that is so like him!

Manly. So, the family comes on finely! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. An hundred pound in the morning, and want another afore night! Waunds and fire! the lord mayor of London could not hold it at this rate.

Manly. Oh, do you feel it, sir? [*Aside.*

Lady W. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, madam ! why, do you consider what a hundred pound a day comes to in a year ?

Lady W. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a year this morning—That, now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

Sir Fran. A thousand pound ! Yes ; but mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Enter 'SQUIRE RICHARD.

'Squire R. Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be coaled : and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady W. Bless me, Sir Francis ! you are not going to sup by yourself ?

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady W. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear ? We shall all eat in half an hour ; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Manly. By no means, Sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran. Well, sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Manly. You'll excuse me, madam——

Lady W. Since you have business, sir——

[*Exit MANLY.*

Enter MRS. MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs. Motherly ! you were saying, this morning, you had some very fine lace to show me—can't I see it now ?

[*SIR FRANCIS stares.*

Mrs. M. Why, really, madam, I had made a sort

of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it, for the birth-day; but your ladyship—

Lady W. Oh, I die if I don't see it before her.

'Squire R. Woant you goa, feyther?

Sir Fran. Waunds, lad, I shall ha' no stomach, at this rate!

Mrs. M. Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and, for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it.

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost, now?

Mrs. M. Nay, if Sir Francis does not like of it, madam—

Lady W. He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

Lady W. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a year, and who got it you; go, eat your dinner, and be thankful, go! [*Driving him to the door.*] Come, Mrs. Motherly.

[*Exit LADY WRONGHEAD, with MRS. MOTHERLY.*]

Sir Fran. Very fine! so here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pound a day, in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods flesh! things had need go well at this rate!

'Squire R. Nay, nay—come, feyther.

[*Exeunt SIR FRANCIS and 'SQUIRE RICHARD.*]

Enter MYRTILLA.

Myr. Madam, my lady desires you and the Count will please to come, and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

Count B. We'll wait upon her—

Jenny. So, I told you how it was; you see she can't bear to leave us together.

Count B. No matter, my dear: you know she has asked me to stay supper: so, when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs. Myrtilia will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, madam, you may command me in any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

Count B. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better, if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow, you know, at the masquerade: and then!—— [Exit.

Myr. So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

Count B. Well; child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count B. Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my Lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine, at the same time.

Count B. Oh, it's true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my Lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball night, before they go to the Haymarket.

Count B. Good.

Myr. Now, the doctor proposes we should all come thither in our habits, and, when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—

crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to bed together.

Count B. Admirable ! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child.

Myr. And may he tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live—But I must run to my 'squire.

Count B. And I to the ladies—so, your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead !

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset ! [*Exit.*

Count B. Why, ay ! Count ! That title has been of some use to me, indeed ; not that I have any more pretence to it, than I have to a blue ribbon. Yet I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality—But—*tempora mutantur*—since that damned squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If I can snap up Miss Jenny, and her eight thousand pounds, I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them : for, since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools, that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Why, so we did——and all as merry as grigs——I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with——But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my Lady Townly here, with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my Lady Noble's assembly, forsooth——A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnce! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box——so, about four or five in the morning—home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table.

Manly. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling—among a parcel of pigtail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Manly. If you remember, I gave you a hint of this.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true, you did so: but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Manly. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran. Ah, this London is a base place indeed!—Waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a gaol?

Manly. Why, truly, there seems to me but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Manly. The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Ods flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a year behind me?

Manly. Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come dawns withawt it.

Manly. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a gaol without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at you have no great opinion of my journey to London then, cousin?

Manly. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran. Good lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Manly. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus——In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster: in a fortnight my lady will run you into gaol, by keeping the best company——In four-and-twenty hours your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran. I'the name o'goodness, why should you think all this?

Manly. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Manly. Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. I hear company entering——You know they see masks here to-day——conceal yourself in this room, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you——Ah, my lady! my Lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into!

Manly. Hush ! to your post ; here comes one couple already.

[*SIR FRANCIS and MANLY retire through the centre door.*

Enter 'SQUIRE RICHARD and MYRTILLA, in Masquerade Dresses.

'Squire R. What, is this the doctor's chamber ?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

'Squire R. Well, but where is he ?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn without witnesses : so, when the Count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

'Squire R. Well, well, tit for tat ! ay, ay, that will be friendly

Myr. And see, here they come !

Enter COUNT BASSET and MISS JENNY, in Masquerade Dresses.

Count B. So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still ! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma ; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip ! Lawd, do but feel how it beats here !

Count B. Oh, the pretty flutterer ! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation !

Jenny. Ay, you say so——but let's see now——Oh, lud ! I vow it thumps purely——well, well, I see it will do ; and so where's the parson ?

Count B. Mrs. Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us ?

Myr. He only staid for you, sir ; I'll fetch him immediately. [Exit.

Jenny. Pray, sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess !

Count B. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. Oh, lud ! how her back will be up then, when she meets me at an assembly ; or you and I in our coach and six at Hyde-Park together !

Count B. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The Countess of Basset's servants !

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious ! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way ! Hold up, says the chairman ; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my Lady Quadrille's ? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I——So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead ; and away they trot, swing ! swang ! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing ! and——Oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality !

Count B. Well ! I see that plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of them all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

'Squire R. Troth ! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life ! Thof' in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a-rope makes the parson stay so ?

Count B. O, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, with a CONSTABLE.

Const. Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here ?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the COUNT.*]

Count B. Heyday ! what, in masquerade, doctor ?

Const. Doctor ! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man : but if you are called Count Basset, I have a

billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count B. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you, for forgery, sir.

Count B. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately. [**SIR FRANCIS and MANLY advance.**

Jenny. Oh, dear me, what's the matter? [*Trembling.*

Count B. Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

'Squire R. Oh, ho, is that all!

Sir Fran. No, sirrah! that is not all.

[**SIR FRANCIS coming softly behind the 'SQUIRE, knocks him down with his cane.**

'Squire R. Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Manly. Hold, hold, Sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray, sir.

Sir Fran. Wounds, cousin, I ha'n't patience.

Count B. Manly! nay then I'm blown to the devil!

[*Aside.*

'Squire R. Oh, my head! my head!

Enter LADY WRONGHEAD, dressed as a Shepherdess.

Lady W. What's the matter here, gentlemen? For Heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, madam; no murder; only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. [*To JENNY.*] And for you, Mrs. Hotupon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pick-pocket?

Count B. So, so, all's out I find? [*Aside.*

Jenny. Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the Count a man of quality then?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes, one of the unchanged ones, it seems.

Lady W. [*Aside.*] Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business then—slighted for her! I ha'n't patience!—and, for ought I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

Manly. Mr. Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night; for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

Lady W. Indeed, you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran. Not stir? Waunds, madam——

Manly. Hold, sir!—if you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend indeed!

Manly. [*Apart to LADY WRONGHEAD.*] Look you, madam; as to the favour you designed me, in sending this spurious letter enclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin.—Now if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady W. What do you mean, sir?

Manly. Why, Sir Francis——shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

Lady W. Ha! my billet-doux to the Count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Manly. What shall I say to Sir Francis, madam?

Lady W. Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience.

[*Apart to MANLY.*

Manly. Sir Francis——my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Manly. Come, come, Sir Francis, take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful!——And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count B. Mr. Manly ; sir, I hope you won't ruin me?

Manly. Did not you forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir !

Count B. Sir——I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate——But it has hurt nobody yet, sir ; I beg you will not stigmatize me ; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir.

Manly. Look you, sir, I have not much time to waste with you : but if you expect mercy yourself, you must show it to one you have been cruel to.

Count B. Cruel, sir !

Manly. Have you not ruined this young woman ?

Count B. I, sir !

Manly. I know you have——therefore you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

Count B. Dear sir !

Manly. No words, sir, a wife, or a mittimus.

Count B. Lord, sir ! this is the most unmerciful mercy !

Manly. A private penance, or a public one—Constable !

Count B. Hold, sir, since you are pleased to give me

my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Manly. It must be done this minute, sir; the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Myr. Come, sir, don't repine: marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

Count B. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Manly. Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it; as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds, to begin a new honeymoon with. [*Gives it to MYRTILLA.*]

Count B. Sir, this is so generous an act——

Manly. No compliments, dear sir——I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him? [*Exit.*]

Const. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count B. Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however. And I am not the first of the fraternity who has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another——Come, spouse.

Myr. Yes, my life.

[*Exeunt MYRTILLA, COUNT, and CONSTABLE.*]

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever——come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witness of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—A Dressing Room.

LADY TOWNLY *discovered as just up*, MRS. TRUSTY *waiting.*

Mrs. T. Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so ill?

Lady T. How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Mrs. T. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady T. Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Mrs. T. Indeed, madam, it's a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady T. Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over fond of my lord—yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Mrs. T. Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady T. Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Mrs. T. Mercy forbid, madam!

Lady T. Broke, ruined, plundered!—stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Mrs. T. You don't tell me so, madam!

Lady T. And where to raise ten pound in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

Mrs. T. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady T. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Mrs. T. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—

Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late——

Lady T. Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Mrs. T. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady T. Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to a—what's his filthy name?

Mrs. T. Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr. Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady T. The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately. [*Exit TRUSTY.*] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven, for ever!—No, after that horrid bar of my chance—that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake——Sit up all night—lose all one's money—dream of winning thousands—wake without a shilling! and then——How like a hag I look!—In short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder. If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous——If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds, but I should hate the town in a fortnight—But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Mrs. T. Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr. Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady T. Run to the staircase head again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant.

[*Mrs. TRUSTY runs out, and speaks.*]

Mrs. T. [Within.] Mr. Poundage!—a hem! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly!

Pound. [Within.] I'll come to you presently.

Mrs. T. [Within.] Presently won't do, man; you must come this minute.

Pound. [Within.] I am but just paying a little money here.

Mrs. T. [Within.] Ods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady, this moment—quick!

Enter MRS. TRUSTY.

Lady T. Will the monster come, or no?

Mrs. T. Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady T. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

[POUNDAGE comes to the door, with a money bag in his hand.]

Mrs. T. Oh, it's well you are come, sir! where's the fifty pounds?

Pound. Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt below for it.

Mrs. T. No matter; my lady says you must not pay him with that money; there's not enough, it seems—there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it—besides there is a mistake in the account too—*[Twitching the bag from him.]* But she is not at leisure to examine it now: so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady T. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, and it please your ladyship—

Lady T. Pr'ythee don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound. Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam.

[Exit.]

Mrs. T. There they are, madam—[*Pours the money out of the bag.*]—The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hands, I protest, it made me tremble for them!—I fancy, your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, ma'am. [*Takes a guinea.*]

Lady T. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Mrs. T. No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady T. Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but, hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill humour.

Mrs. T. I'll listen.

Lady T. Pr'ythee do.

[*Mrs. TRUSTY goes to the door.*]

Poundage. [*Without.*] Well, but Mr. Lutestring—

Lutestring. [*Without.*] I tell you, I insist——

Poundage. [*Without.*] Well, but can't you call next week, Mr. Lutestring?

Lutestring. [*Without.*] I'll be made a fool of no longer, Mr. Poundage; and if you don't pay me my money——

Poundage. [*Without.*] Bless my soul, Mr. Lutestring, sure you wont——

Lutestring. [*Without.*] Indeed, but I will, though!—I won't swear, but if I leave this house, without my money, I'll be damned, that's all.

Mrs. T. Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him—Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady T. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Mrs. T. Ha! I think all's silent, of a sudden—may be, the porter has knocked him down—I'll step and see. [*Exit.*]

Lady T. These tradespeople are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them!

Enter MRS. TRUSTY.

Mrs. T. Oh, madam! undone! undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over—If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady T. No matter; it will come round presently; I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Mrs. T. Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in!

Lady T. Do you get out of the way, then. [*Exit MRS. TRUSTY.*] I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give them me.

Enter LORD TOWNLY.

Lord T. How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

Lady T. You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence!

Lord T. I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it; I thought I had given you money, three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady T. Yes: but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus—what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady T. Gone.

Lord T. Gone! what way, madam?

Lady T. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord T. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady T. In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord T. Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady T. Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord T. Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

Lady T. My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

Lord T. Peoh! your spirit grows ridiculous!—you have neither honour, worth, or innocence, to support it.

Lady T. You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord T. After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady T. I scorn your imputation; and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart is your monitor—'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded; you have less to complain of, than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord T. Death, madam! do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed—for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more;—if she conceals her shame, does less; and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

Lady T. I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord T. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you in yourself had seen her—I am amazed

our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce, for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb, has possession of it?

Lady T. If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

Lord T. That, madam, I have long despaired of; and, since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit, that, with our hearts, our persons too, should separate.—This house you sleep no more in; though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady T. Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour!

Lord T. Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

Lady T. Done with me! If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it—but have a care; I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord T. Recalled! Who's there?

Enter WILLIAMS.

Desire my sister and Mr. Manly to walk up.

[Exit WILLIAMS.]

Lady T. My lord, you may proceed as you please; but, pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord T. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible; and, though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his

misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady T. I don't know what figure you may make, my lord ; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord T. Be sparing of your spirit, madam ; you'll need it to support you.

Enter LADY GRACE and MR. MANLY.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies, than words can make for it.

Manly. Then, pray, make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord T. Sister, I have the same excuse to entreat of you too.

Lady G. To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord T. Thus then—As you both were present at my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation—I know, sir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you ; but, as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so, I hope, you are conscious, that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent on her side.

Manly. My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lord T. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you—the world, I fear, is too well informed of them—For the good lord, your dear father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter.—As the Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and, to our mutual shame I speak it, more than happy wives desire—But those indulgencies must end—state, equipage, and splendour, but ill become the vices that misuse them—The decent necessities of life shall be sup-

...to carry you from home, and
...your tender heart; my
...morning, in remembrance of
...and your condition, being
...your allowance shall be
...lavish of your little, or
...that little shall be less;
...my friend, that names you in my heart,
...My heart bleeds for her!

Edith. Oh, Bluffy, look there! ...
...with me, and witness to my growth.
...There was a time, when I believed that ...
...of vice, or of docky; there I proposed ...
...my home; there I, for ever, hoped to find
...self-companion, a faithful friend, a useful ...
...and a tender mother—but, oh, how bitter ...
...satisfaction!

Bluffy. The world is different in its sense of
...with, offended as you are, I know you will ...
...Edith. Fear me not.

Edith. This last reproach, I see, has struck ...
...I do not know how to answer you.

Edith. No, let me not, (though I this morning
...from my heart for ever) let me not ...
...beyond her crimes—I know the ...
...of any tale that feeds its appetite of ...
...and ... severities of this kind, ...
...to mention, I here, before ...
...the first suspicion raised against ...
...therefore, when abroad, ...
...of her that that justice ...
...and ... a ...
...and ...
...where ...
...and ...

Lady T. Support me—save me—hide me from the world !
 [Falling on LADY GRACE's neck.

Lord T. [Returning.] I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment ; therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms, than suit the honour of an injured husband.
 [Offers to go out.

Manly. [Interposing.] My lord, you must not, shall not, leave her thus!—One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong. If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer, with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that, would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

Lord T. Consider—since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady T. Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult ; and, undeserved, I knew your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord T. I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady T. My lord, you ever have complained I wanted love ; but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another, so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder, at my coldness.

Manly. This, my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord T. Proceed—I am attentive.

Lady T. Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty ; which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves—I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain : yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that, when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of me, I even there declined the liberty he gave, and, to his own election, yielded up my youth—his tender

care, my lord, directed him to you—Our hands were joined, but still my heart was wedded to its folly :—My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures.—The husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly spirited obeyed.—I knew no directors, but my passions ; no master, but my will.—Even you, my lord, sometime o'ercome by love, were pleased with my delights ; nor then foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence.—And, though I call myself ungrateful while I own it, yet as a truth, it cannot be denied, that, kind indulgence has undone me ; it added strength to my habitual failings, and, in a heart thus warm in wild, unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord T. Oh, Manly ! where has this creature's heart been buried ? [*Apart.*

Manly. If yet recoverable, how vast the treasure !

[*Apart.*

Lady T. What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession ; my errors, (give them, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended—No, what's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate—no plea can alter ! What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure ? Time only can convince you of my future conduct : therefore, till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely, contrite life, were little to the innocent ; but, to have deserved this separation, will strew perpetual thorns upon my pillow.—Sister, farewell ! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me ; but when you think I have atoned my follies past, persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord T. No, madam ! your errors, thus renounced, this instant are forgotten !—Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common

gladness in their meeting; but, from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces.

[*Embracing* LADY TOWNLY.

Lady T. What words—what love—what duty can repay such obligations?

Lord T. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady T. Oh! till this moment, never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you!

Lord T. By heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable!—Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake of my felicity—my new-born joy! See here, the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady G. Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to me than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Manly. Long, long, and mutual, may it flow!

Lord T. To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady T. Sister, a day like this——

Lady G. Admits of no excuse against the general joy.

[*Gives her hand to* MANLY.

Manly. A joy, like mine——despairs of words to speak it.

Lord T. Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother! [Embracing him.

Manly. Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Lady T. Sister, to your unerring virtue, I now commit the guidance of my future days.

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shall lead;

For, in the marriage state, the world must own,
Divided happiness was never known.
To make it mutual, Nature points the way ;
Let husbands govern ; gentle wives obey. [*Exeunt.*

THE END.

THE
JEALOUS WIFE;
A COMEDY,
BY
GEORGE COLMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OAKLY.
MAJOR OAKLY.
CHARLES.
RUSSET.
SIR HARRY BEAGLE.
CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.
LORD TRINKET.
PARIS.
WILLIAM.
JOHN.
TOM.
SERVANT.

MRS. OAKLY.
LADY FREELOVE.
HARRIET.
TOILET.
CHAMBERMAID.

SCENE—*London.*

THE
JEALOUS WIFE.

~~TO BE PERFORMED~~

ACT I.

Scene I.—A Room in Oakly's House.

Noise heard within.

Mrs. Oak. [*Within.*] Don't tell me—I know it is so—
It's monstrous, and I will not bear it.

Oak. [*Within.*] But, my dear!—

Mrs. Oak. Nay, nay, &c. [*Squabbling within.*

Enter MRS. OAKLY, with a Letter, OAKLY following.

Mrs. Oak. Say what you will, Mr. Oakly, you shall
never persuade me, but this is some filthy intrigue of
yours.

Oak. I can assure you, my love——

Mrs. Oak. Your love!—Don't I know your——Tell
me, I say, this instant, every circumstance relating to
this letter.

Oak. How can I tell you, when you will not so much
as let me see it?

Mrs. Oak. Look you, Mr. Oakly, this usage is not to
be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing my tenderness,
and soft disposition.—To be perpetually running over
the whole town, nay, the whole kingdom too, in pursuit
of your amours!—Did not I discover, that you was great
with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you

contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs. Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with Lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

Oak. Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body, that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

Mrs. Oak. Go, go, you are a false man—Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?——Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

Oak. Let you know? Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I should know the contents of it!

Mrs. Oak. Heaven be praised, I stopped it!—I suspected some of these doings for some time past—But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

Oak. I beg, my dear, that you would moderate your passion!—Show me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

Mrs. Oak. Innocence!—Abominable!—Innocence! But I am not to be made such a fool—I am convinced of your perfidy, and very sure that——

Oak. 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses——Will you hear me?

Mrs. Oak. No, you are a base man: and I will not hear you.

Oak. Why then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me, I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant!

[Going.]

Mrs. Oak. Ay, go, you cruel man!—Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries. —How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation—— [*Throwing herself into a chair.*]

Oak. There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further —If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant —Never sure was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her? Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you.

Mrs. Oak. I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me.

[*Whining.*]

Oak. Do not vex yourself at this rate—I love you most passionately—Indeed I do—This must be some mistake.

Mrs. Oak. Oh, I am an unhappy woman! [*Weeping.*]

Oak. Dry up thy tears, my love, and be comforted! You will find that I am not to blame in this matter —Come, let me see this letter——Nay, you shall not deny me. [*Taking the letter.*]

Mrs. Oak. There! take it, you know the hand, I am sure.

Oak. [*Reading.*] *To Charles Oakly, Esq.*—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, a good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, laugh at me, do!

Oak. Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee——But what says the letter!——[*Reading.*] *Daughter eloped—you must be privy to it—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—revenge—um, um, um——injured father,*

HENRY RUSSET.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] Well, sir—you see I have detected you——Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

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What, are you sure of that?
[To herself] What, are you sure of that?

Charles! The day of my
return is fixed in the country. The day of my
return to Chicago is also fixed.

[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

Charles!—No! Impossible! This is
impossible!—[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, how certainly will this poor lady be
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, how certainly will this poor lady be
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, how certainly will this poor lady be
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

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[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

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[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, how certainly will this poor lady be
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, how certainly will this poor lady be
[To herself] What shall I do? What shall I do?

But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this——Give me the letter——*[Snatching the letter.]*——You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it. *[Exit.]*

Oak. This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and his lady's family!——I never imagined that he was of such abandoned principles.

Enter MAJOR OAKLY and CHARLES.

Charles. Good-morrow, sir!

Maj. Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow! ——What! you have been at the old work, I find. I heard you——ding! dong! i'faith!——She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why sure you've had a remarkable warm bout on't.——You seem more ruffled than usual.

Oak. I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! you may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

Charles. Sir!

Maj. Hey-day! What, has a curtain lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this!

Oak. To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning. But don't you tremble at the consequences?

Charles. I see, sir, that you are displeased with me, but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

Oak. Tell me, sir!——where is Miss Harriet Russet?

Charles. Miss Harriet Russet!——Sir——Explain.

Oak. Have not you decoyed her from her father?

Charles. I!——Decoyed her——Decoyed my Harriet! ——I would sooner die, than do her the least injury ——What can this mean?

Maj. I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

Oak. I was in hopes, Charles, you had better principles. But there's a letter just come from her father——

Charles. A letter!—What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriet, Major!—— The letter, sir, the letter this moment, for heaven's sake!

Oak. If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence——

Charles. Dear sir, excuse me——I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll——

Oak. Let you see it!——I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs. Oakly has it.

Charles. Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. *[Exit hastily.]*

Maj. Hey-day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles.

Oak. I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve too to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Would to heaven I could quiet them for ever!

Maj. Why, pray now, my dear, naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of window, when a pretty young woman has passed by, or——

Oak. How can you trifle with my distresses, Major? Did not I tell you, it was about a letter?

Maj. A letter!—hum—A suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true lover's knot now, hey! or a heart transfixed with darts; or possibly the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or perhaps the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer, pricked with a pin, and the direction written in a vile

scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be! ha! ha! ha!

Oak. Pooh! brother—Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, not for me—this outrageous jealousy is the devil.

Maj. Mere matrimonial blessings and domestic comfort, brother! jealousy is a certain sign of love.

Oak. Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house, like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

Maj. Ay, ay, there you've hit it; Mrs. Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

Oak. You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife—A debauched bachelor—a rattle-brained, rioting fellow—who have picked up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-makers' 'prentices.

Maj. So much the better!—so much the better! women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid; every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me.—No, no! no woman should ever domineer over me, let her be mistress or wife.

Oak. Single men can be no judges in these cases. They must happen in all families. But when things are driven to extremities—to see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves too—one's wife—who can withstand it? You neither speak nor think like a man that has loved, and been married, Major!

Maj. I wish I could hear a married man speak my language—I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case for all that. I know yours and Mrs. Oakly's disposition to a hair. She is all impetuosity and fire—A very magazine of touchwood and gunpowder. You are hot enough too, upon occasion, but then it's over in an instant. In comes love and conjugal affection, as you call it; that is, mere folly and weakness—and you draw off your forces, just when you should pursue the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother.

Oak. Why, what would you have me do?

Maj. Do as you please for one month, whether she likes it or not; and I'll answer for it she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after. In short, do but show yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother.

Oak. I believe you are in the right, Major! I see you are in the right. I'll do it—I'll certainly do it.—But then it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it, perhaps, may be fatal.

Maj. Fits! ha! ha! ha!—I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do; besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by?—Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet?—No, no, these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

Oak. True, very true—you are certainly in the right.—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day?—I'll order the coach, and go with you.

Maj. O brave ! keep up this spirit, and you are made for ever.

Oak. You shall see now, Major !—Who's there ?

Enter a SERVANT.

Order the coach directly. I shall dine out to-day.

Serv. The coach, sir !—Now, sir ?

Oak. Ay, now, immediately.

Serv. Now, sir !—the—the—coach, sir ?—that is—my mistress—

Maj. Sirrah ! do as you are bid. Bid them put to this instant.

Serv. Ye—yes, sir—yes, sir. [Exit.

Oak. Well, where shall we dine ?

Maj. At the St. Albans, or where you will. This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

Oak. I will have my own way, I am determined.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. I am steel.

Maj. Bravo !

Oak. Adamant.

Maj. Bravissimo !

Oak. Just what you'd have me.

Maj. Why that's well said. But, will you do it ?

Oak. I will.

Maj. You won't.

Oak. I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer. But, harkye, Major ; my hat and cane lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

Maj. Steal them ! for shame ! Pr'ythee take them boldly ; call for them, make them bring them to you here ; and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

Oak. No, no,—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone, and when I return, you know, I shall exert

myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

Maj. Well, take your own way.

Oak. Ay, ay—let me manage it, let me manage it.

[*Exit.*

Maj. Manage it! ay, to be sure, you are a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of Mrs. Oakly's already: and in a week's time I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

Enter CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

Charles. Ruined and undone! She's gone, uncle! my Harriet's lost for ever.

Maj. Gone off with a man?—I thought so: they are all alike.

Charles. Oh no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with Sir Harry Beagle.

Maj. 'Faith, a girl of spirit, but whence comes all this intelligence?

Charles. In an angry letter from her father—How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriet, much offended her, by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

Maj. A very agreeable refuge for a young lady to be sure, and extremely decent!

Charles. What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of!

Maj. Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly young dog, you would ruin yourself with her father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive Sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling

you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you; but all to no purpose.

Charles. What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone and defenceless!—Where, where can she be?

Maj. What relations or friends has she in town?

Charles. Relations! let me see.—'Faith, I have it!—If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, Lady Frelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

Maj. Lady Frelove's! Hold, hold, Charles!—do you know her ladyship?

Charles. Not much; but I'll break through all, to get to my Harriet.

Maj. I do know her ladyship.

Charles. Well, and what do you know of her?

Maj. O nothing!—Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all—

Charles. What do you mean?

Maj. That Lady Frelove is an arrant—By the by, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriet's father from Lord Trinket?

Charles. Yes; but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

Maj. Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles. Lady Frelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning too.—Have a care of her, I say have a care of her.

Charles. If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

Maj. Nay, now you are too violent—stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. Come, is the coach ready? let us begone. Does Charles go with us?

Charles. I go with you!—What can I do? I am so vexed and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

Mrs. Oak. [*Within.*] The coach!—dines out!—where is your master?

Oak. Zounds, brother! here she is!

Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. Pray, Mr. Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

Oak. Don't be uneasy, my dear!—I have a little business to settle with my brother; so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles, to the tavern.

Mrs. Oak. Why cannot you settle your business here, as well as at a tavern? but it is some of your ladies' business, I suppose, and so you must get rid of my company.—This is chiefly your fault, Major Oakly!

Maj. Lord, sister, what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [*Coolly.*

Mrs. Oak. It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose—

Maj. Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home, till you are quite tired of one another, and then you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

Mrs. Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that you would trouble yourself about your own affairs; and let me tell you, sir, that I—

Oak. Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the Major, my dear!—It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

Mrs. Oak. Come back!—why need you go out?—I know well enough when you mean to deceive me; for then there is always a pretence of dining with Sir John,

or my lord, or somebody; but when you tell me, that you are going to a tavern, it's such a bare-faced affront—

Oak. This is so strange now!—Why, my dear, I shall only just——

Mrs. Oak. Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose.

Oak. Well, well, I won't go then.—Will that convince you? I'll stay with you, my dear!——will that satisfy you?

Maj. For shame! hold out, if you are a man. [*Apart.*

Oak. She has been so much vexed this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

Maj. Fie! Fie! go out, or you are undone. [*Apart.*

Oak. You see it's impossible.—[*Apart to Mrs. Oakly.*] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, ay, pray do, sir.—Dine at a tavern, indeed! [*Going.*

Oak. [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, Major.

Maj. Steel and adamant!——Ah!

Mrs. Oak. [*Returning.*] Mr. Oakly!

Oak. O, my dear! [*Exit Mr. and Mrs. Oakly.*

Maj. Ha! ha! ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

Charles. O, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh now.

Maj. So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St. Albans by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

Charles. Don't depend on me. I shall be running all over the town, in pursuit of my Harriet; at all events I'll go directly to Lady Freelove's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, heaven knows.

Maj. Harkye, Charles! If you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house: I have a snug room, and—

Charles. Phoo ! pr'ythee, uncle, don't trifle with me now.

Maj. Well, seriously then, my house is at your service.

Charles. I thank you ; but I must be gone.

Maj. Ay, ay, bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a post chaise, take the chaplain of our regiment along with you, wheel her down to Scotland, and when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father ; that's the modern art of making love, Charles ! *[Exit.*

ACT II.

Scene I.—A Room in the Bull and Gate Inn.

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE and TOM.

Sir H. Ten guineas a mare, and a crown the man ? hey, Tom !

Tom. Yes, your honour.

Sir H. And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood ?

Tom. He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour !

Sir H. Is it attested ?

Tom. Very well attested ; it is signed by Jack Spur and my Lord Startal. *[Giving the pedigree.]*

Sir H. Let me see.—*[Reading.]* *Tom-come-tickle-me was out of the famous Tuntwivy mare, by Sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse, White Stockings. White Stockings, his dam, was got by Lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister*

to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire Tom Jones; his granddam was the Irish Duchess, and his grandsire Squire Sportley's Trajan; his great, and great great granddam, were Newmarket Peggy and Black Moll, and his great grandsire, and great great grandsire, were Sir Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince Anamaboo. his

JOHN + SPUR,
mark.

STARTAL.

Tom: All fine horses, and won every thing! a foal out of your honour's Bald-faced Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

Sir H. Well then, we'll think on't:—But, pox on't, Tom, I have certainly knocked up my little roan gelding, in this damn'd wild-goose chase of threescore miles an end.

Tom. He's deadly blown, to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriet certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

Sir H. No, no, we traced her all the way up.—But d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

Tom. Sir Roger Turf's horses are to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there—but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip—I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

Sir H. Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding; master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom, see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes.—But where's Mr. Russet all this while?

Tom. I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pie, and inquiring after Madam Harriet, in the kitchen.

[illegible]

of her, when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

Sir H. You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

Rus. Damn her blood!—Harriet! my dear, provoking Harriet! Where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, 'faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Rus. Why don't you inquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?—t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.—What a plague it is to have a daughter! When one loves her to distraction, and has toiled and laboured to make her happy, the ungrateful slut will sooner go to hell her own way—but she shall have him.—I will make her happy, if I break her heart for it.—A provoking gipsy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak? why don't you tell me?—Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

Sir H. Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!—this damned chase after her will cost me a thousand—if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have saved the lives of my whole family.—I'll hold you six to two that—

Rus. Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose—I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.—How shall I find her out?—Do, pr'ythee, Sir Harry, my dear, honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

Sir H. Suppose you put an advertisement into the newspapers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

Rus. Advertise her!—What! describe my daughter, and expose her, in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or strayed!—recovered a bay mare!—the devil's in the fellow!—he thinks of nothing but racers, and bay mares, and stallions.—'Sdeath, I wish your—

Sir H. I wish Harriet was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

Rus. Which way shall I turn myself?—I am half distracted.—If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach—if she does not send to me to-day, I'll give her up for ever—perhaps though, she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.—No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead—I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

Enter Tom.

Sir H. Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

Tom. A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-sore.

Rus. Damn Snip and Lady!—have you heard any thing of Harriet?

Tom. Why, I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him, Madam Harriet was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetched away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

Rus. Did she come alone?

Tom. Quite alone, only a servant maid, please your honour?

Rus. And what part of the town did they go to?

Tom. John Ostler says as how, they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor-square.

Sir H. Soho! puss——Yoica!

Rus. She is certainly gone to that young rogue—he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence—or else she is with her own aunt, Lady Freelove—they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house, and in the meanwhile, Sir Harry, you shall step to Lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding, She shall marry you to-night. Come along, Sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

Sir H. Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics! [Exeunt.

Scene II.—Oakly's House.

Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the Major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.——They think me a fool, I find——but I'll be too much for them yet.——I have desired to speak with Mr. Oakly, and expect him here immediately. His temper is naturally open, and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him.——Here he comes.——How hard it is to dissemble one's anger! Oh, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

Enter OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down.
[*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age, till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning. [*Mildly.*

Oak. Why, really, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Nay, don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

Oak. Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity. Do but lay aside your cruel, unjust suspicion, and we should never have the least difference.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed I begin to think so. I'll endeavour to get the better of it. And really sometimes it is very ridiculous. My uneasiness this morning, for instance, ha! ha! ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last—was not I very angry with you? ha! ha! ha!

[*Affecting a laugh.*

Oak. Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

Mrs. Oak. I am apt to be too violent; I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*]—Well—no matter—what is become of Charles?

Oak. Poor fellow! he is on the wing, rambling all over the town, in pursuit of this young lady.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone, pray?

Oak. First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

Mrs. Oak. Relations! Who are they? Where do they live?

Oak. There is an aunt of hers lives just in the neighbourhood; Lady Freelove.

Mrs. Oak. Lady Freelove! Oho! gone to Lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

Oak. I don't know ; but I hope so, with all my soul.

Mrs. Oak. Hope ! with all your soul ; do you hope so ? [Alarmed.]

Oak. Hope so ! ye—yes—why, don't you hope so ? [Surprised.]

Mrs. Oak. Why—yes—[*Recovering.*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear, it must give me great satisfaction, as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

Oak. I should think so ; and really I don't know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

Mrs. Oak. You are well acquainted with her then ?

Oak. To be sure, my dear ; after seeing her so often last summer at the Major's house in the country, and at her father's.

Mrs. Oak. So often !

Oak. O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed ! But pray—a—a—a—I say—a—[Confused.]

Oak. What do you say, my dear ?

Mrs. Oak. I say—a—a—[*Stammering.*] Is she handsome ?

Oak. Prodigiously handsome indeed.

Mrs. Oak. Prodigiously handsome ! and is she reckoned a sensible girl ?

Oak. A very sensible, modest, agreeable young lady as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You can't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles ! she soon made a conquest of him, and no wonder, she has so many elegant accomplishments ! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour ! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

Mrs. Oak. Lord ! you seem quite in raptures about her !

Oak. Raptures!—not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

Mrs. Oak. Oh, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

Oak. Don't you think so.

Mrs. Oak. I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concerned for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

Oak. Was you, my love? that is very good of you. Why, to be sure, we must endeavour to assist him. Let me see? How can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

Mrs. Oak. Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—You know I would do any thing to serve Charles, and oblige you.

[*Mildly.*]

Oak. That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people——

Mrs. Oak. I believe so; but what's your proposal?

Oak. I am sure you'll like it.—Charles, you know, may, perhaps, be so lucky as to meet with this lady——

Mrs. Oak. True.

Oak. Now I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Well!

Oak. Bring her home here——

Mrs. Oak. How!

Oak. Yes, bring her home here, my dear;—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

Mrs. Oak. Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

Oak. Why!—what!—

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such assurance! [*Rises.*] Take her under my protection! What! would you keep her under my nose?

Oak. Nay, I never conceived—I thought you would have approved—

Mrs. Oak. What! make me your convenient woman!—No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

Oak. Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

Mrs. Oak. Astonished! yes—confused, detected, betrayed, by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an idiot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr. Oakly!

Oak. The letter! why sure that—

Mrs. Oak. Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

Oak. Nay, but—

Mrs. Oak. Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [*Exit Mrs. OAKLY.*]

Oak. Was there ever any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! Hints!—hints I have given her!—What can she mean?—

TOILET crossing the stage.

Toilet! where are you going?

Toil. To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir. [*Exit.*]

Oak. What an unhappy woman ! Now will she sit all day, feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN crossing the stage.

Well, sir, what's your business ?

John. Going to order the chariot, sir !—my lady's going out immediately. *[Exit.*

Oak. Going out ! what is all this ?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind ! made up of storms and tempests ! I can't bear it : and one way or other I will put an end to it. *[Exit.*

Scene II.—Lady Freelove's House.

Enter LADY FREELOVE, with a card—SERVANT following.

Lady F. *[Reading as she enters.]—And will take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship en cavalier, as he comes from the menége.* Does any body wait, that brought this card ?

Serv. Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

Lady F. My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Russet ?

Serv. In her own chamber, madam.

Lady F. What is she doing ?

Serv. Writing, I believe, madam.

Lady F. Oh, ridiculous !—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. *[Apart.]—Let her know, I should be glad of her company here.* *[Exit SERVANT.]* It is a mighty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriet, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own choosing, her first love ; that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil ; and the first air of consequence which

a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul!—But Oakly must not have her, positively. A match with Lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

Enter HARRIET.

Well, Harriet, still in the pouts! nay, pr'ythee my dear little runaway girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

Har. Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

Lady F. Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain; but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post to acquaint him that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you were ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, Sir Harry Beagle.—Lord! Lord! what a difference there is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been a hundred miles off in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

Har. I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

Lady F. I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love.—Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking, simple gentleman,

without a title ! and when to my knowledge you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

Har. Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me, but many a man of quality would make me miserable.

Lady F. Indeed, my dear, these antediluvian notions will never do now-a-days ; and at the same time too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child ! and they have made fine work with Lord Trinket.

Har. Lord Trinket ! [Contemptuously.]

Lady F. Yes, Lord Trinket ; you know it as well as I do ; and yet, you ill-natured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, pry'thee do.

Har. Indeed I can't, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

Lady F. Why so, child ? He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

Har. Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly, with a great deal of good breeding ; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person ; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb ; qualifications which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

Lady F. A satirist too ! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you. There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

Har. A superiority, indeed ! for his lordship always behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

Lady F. Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgment of her beauty.

Har. They are freedoms, which I think no innocent woman can allow.

Lady F. Romantic to the last degree!—Why, you are in the country still, Harriet!

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. My Lord Trinket, madam. *[Exit SERVANT.*

Lady F. I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

Enter LORD TRINKET in boots, &c. as from the riding-house.

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Lord T. Your ladyship does me too much honour. Here I am *en bottine* as you see—just come from the *menége*. Miss Russet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, ma'am, [*to HARRIET,*] I begin to conceive great hopes of you; and as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *bon ton*.

Har. Compliment and contempt all in a breath!—My lord, I am obliged to you. But, waving my acknowledgments, give me leave to ask your lordship whether nature and the *bon ton* (as you call it) are so different, that we must give up one in order to obtain the other? ❧

Lord T. Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *bon ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom indeed nature serves very well. For this reason it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature indeed may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now—me—

madam—me——nature never made such a thing as me.

Har. Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her.

Lord T. Then you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment: nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve space. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

Lady F. No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

Lord T. Hum! Why, ay——

Har. Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

Lady F. You are out of nature now, Harriet! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it, my lord! here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert, or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

Lord T. No wonder, madam, you do not adopt the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumpkins of the horrid country. By the by, I met a monster at the riding-house this morning who gave me some intelligence, that will surprise you, concerning your family.

Har. What intelligence?

Lady F. Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? a curiosity, I dare say.

Lord T. This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running horses; but

growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and ever since my brother, Slouch Trinket, has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself, and——

Har. Dear my lord, don't talk of your groom and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

Lord T. Your father, madam, is now in town. This fellow, you must know, is now groom to Sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to inquire after you: for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding-house stables, to look after a horse, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you. Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer, at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

Lady F. The whole set admirably disposed of!

Har. Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

Lord T. Not I, 'pon honour, madam; that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

Lady F. And pray, my lord, where in this town have this polite company bestowed themselves?

Lord T. They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the Bull and Gate Inn, in Holborn.

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! The Bull and Gate! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

Lord T. Very well, Lady Freelove, very well, indeed! There they are, like so many graziers; and there it seems they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

Har. Do, dear madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here. For my part I dare not venture into his presence, till you have, in some measure, pacified him; but, for heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

Lord T. Wretched fellow! Oho! *Courage, Milor Trinket!* *[Aside.*

Lady F. I'll send immediately. Who's there?

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. *[Apart to LADY FREELOVE.]* Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

Lady F. *[Apart to SERVANT.]* I am not at home.—Have they let him in?

Serv. Yes, madam.

Lady F. How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then, show him into my dressing-room, I will come to him there. *[Exit SERVANT.*

Lord T. Lady Freelove! no engagement, I hope? We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

Lady F. The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

Lord T. O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriet, till they are gone. I'll dispatch them as soon as I can, but heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips! though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriet, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. *[Exit.*

Lord T. Gone!—'Pon honour, I am not sorry for the

coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship, for leaving us such an agreeable tête à tête.

Har. Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

Lord T. Not in the least, my dear! We'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you.—'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

Har. I don't understand you.

Lord T. No?—Why then I'll speak plainer.—*[Pausing, and looking her full in the face.]* You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

Har. If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy. *[Going.]*

Lord T. No, no, no, madam, that must not be. *[Stopping her.]* This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

Har. How, sir! you don't intend to do me any violence?

Lord T. 'Pon honour, ma'am, it will be doing great violence to myself, if I do not. You must excuse me.

[Struggling with her.]

Har. Help! help! murder! help!

Lord T. Your yelping will signify nothing—nobody will come. *[Struggling.]*

Har. For heaven's sake!—Sir!—My lord——

[Noise within.]

Lord T. Pox on't, what noise!—Then I must be quick. *[Still struggling.]*

Har. Help! murder! help! help!

Enter CHARLES, hastily.

Charles. What do I hear? My Harriet's voice calling for help!—Ha! *[Seeing them.]* Is it possible?—Turn, ruffian! I'll find you employment. *[Drawing.]*

Lord T. You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour.

[*They fight*—*HARRIET runs out, screaming, Help! &c.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE, SIR HARRY BEAGLE, and SERVANTS.

Lady F. How's this?—Swords drawn in my house!—Part them——[*They are parted.*] This is the most impudent thing——

Lord T. Well, rascal, I shall find a time; I know you, sir!

Charles. The sooner the better; I know your lordship too.

Sir H. I'faith, madam, [*To LADY FREELOVE.*] we had like to have been in at the death.

Lady F. What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither, to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel? [*To CHARLES.*

Charles. Not I, indeed, madam; but I believe his lordship does.

Lord T. Impudent scoundrel!

Lady F. Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you? What brought you here?

Charles. I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered from his lordship's fury; in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

Lady F. Her lover, I suppose; or what?

Charles. At your ladyship's service; though, not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

Lord T. Impertinent rascal!

Lady F. You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

Lord T. Your ladyship may leave that to me.

Charles. Ha! ha!

Sir H. But, pray what is become of the lady all this while? Why, Lady Free love, you told me she was not

here, and i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

Lady F. You shall see her immediately, sir! Who's there?

Enter a SERVANT.

Where is Miss Russet!

Serv. Gone out, madam.

Lady F. Gone out?—Where?

Serv. I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back stairs, crying for help, crossed the servants' hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

Lady F. Blockheads! to let her go out in a chair alone!—Go and inquire after her immediately.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Sir H. Gone!—What a pox, had I just run her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

Lady F. Sir, if you will walk in, *[To SIR HARRY.]* with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable, she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

Charles. I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

Lady F. Mighty well, sir!—My lord, Sir Harry,——I attend you.

Lord T. You shall hear from me, sir! *[To CHARLES.]*

Charles. Very well, my lord.

Sir H. Stole away!——pox on't——stole away!

[Exeunt SIR HARRY and LORD TRINKET.]

Lady F. Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary——

Charles. My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

Lady F. Indeed!—Well, no matter—permit me to acquaint you, sir, that there lies your way out, and that

the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

Charles. That your ladyship may depend on. Since you have put Miss Russet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately.

Lady F. If she has any regard for her reputation, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

Charles. O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

Lady F. Leave my house.

Charles. Directly——A charming house! and a charming lady of the house too!—Ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. Vulgar fellow!

Charles. Fine lady!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT III.

Scene I.—Lady Freelove's House.

Enter LADY FREELOVE, and LORD TRINKET.

Lord T. *Doucement, doucement*, my dear Lady Free-love!—Excuse me, I meant no harm, 'pon honour!

Lady F. Indeed, indeed, my Lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable! What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

Lord T. Just what the world pleases.—It does not signify a doit what they say.—However, I ask pardon; but, egad, I thought it was the best way.—Devil take Sir Harry, and t'other scoundrel too!—That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant!—And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the lord knows whither!—'Pon honour, Lady Free-

love, I can scarce believe this obstinate girl a relation of yours.

Lady F. Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece ! Let us consider what is best to be done.—Will you submit to be governed by me, then ?

Lord T. I'll be all obedience——your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Why then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, merely to save appearances, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

Lord T. Your ladyship is perfectly in the right.—You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world. But should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rusée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know.—But you must beware your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other will lose no opportunities of getting to her.

Lord T. As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bumpkin father, and the baronet.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Captain O'Cutter, to wait on your ladyship.

Lady F. O the hideous fellow ! The Irish sailor-man, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose, he is come to load me

with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

Lord T. Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me——He may be of use.

Lady F. Well——send the creature up then. [*Exit SERVANT.*] But what fine thought is this?

Lord T. A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend——but, hush! here the porpus comes.

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lady F. Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

O'Cut. I am much obliged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way, to tank your ladyship, but I have borne down upon my noble friend his lordship too. I hope your lordship's well?

Lord T. Very well, I thank you, Captain!——But you seem to be hurt in the service: what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

O'Cut. Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, though it entitles us to smart money.

Lady F. And pray, in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, Captain?

O'Cut. Quite out of my element, indeed, my lady. I got it in an engagement by land. A day or two ago, I 'spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchantman. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chase, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to——We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weathermost corner of Ned Gage's hat; so I

immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

Lord T. Well done, noble Captain!—But, however, you will soon have better employment, for I think, the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

O'Cut. The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-sarvice, as any man in the navy.

Lord T. You may depend on my good offices, Captain! But, in the meantime, it is in your power to do me a favour.

O'Cut. A favour, my lord?—your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to serve your lordship, or my good lady here.

Lord T. Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to LADY F.*]—The favour I have to ask of you, Captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows, at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely, by pressing them into his majesty's service.

Lady F. Now I understand——Admirable! [*Apart.*

O'Cut. With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, 'fait. But, by the by, I hope they are not house-keepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil to pay in meddling with them. They boder one so about liberty, and property, and stuff.—It was but t'other day, that Jack Trowser was carried before my Lord Mayor, and lost above a twelvemonth's pay, for nothing at all, at all.

Lord T. I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If

you'll call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

O'Cut. I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys, as you'll wish to clap your two looking eyes upon of a summer's day.

Lord T. I am much obliged to you—But, Captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, I'll do it.

Lord T. What, before you know it?

O'Cut. Fore and aft, my lord!

Lord T. A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour——

O'Cut. Cut his troat!

Lord T. Will you carry him a letter from me?

O'Cut. Indeed and I will:—and I'll take you in tow too; and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

Lord T. Why, then, Captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

O'Cut. Never fear it, my lord——Your sarvant!—My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

Lady F. Captain, yours—Pray give my service to my friend Mrs. O'Cutter. How does she do?

O'Cut. I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely tight and well.

Lord T. How many children have you, Captain?

O'Cut. Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

Lord T. When it is launched, I hope to be at the christening.—I'll stand godfather, Captain!

O'Cut. Your lordship's very good.

Lord T. Well, you'll come to-morrow.

O'Cut. Ay, my lord, and every day next week.—Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut.

[Exit.

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! But, sure you don't intend to

ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

Lord T. O no! Only let them contemplate the inside of a ship, for a day or two.

Lady F. Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

Lord T. Nothing so easy, 'pon honour.—This artifice must, at least, take them out of the way for some time, and, in the meanwhile, measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs. Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

Lord T. Mrs. Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

Lady F. No matter what.—I hate her mortally.—Let her in. *[Exit SERVANT.]*

Lord T. What wind blows her hither?

Lady F. A wind that must blow us some good.

Lord T. How?—I was amazed you chose to see her.

Lady F. How can you be so slow of apprehension! —She comes, you may be sure, on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly, perhaps, to sooth me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match; but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.—Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.—But, away! away!—I think I hear her—slip down the back stairs—or—stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

Lord T. Hush! here she is!

Enter Mrs. Oakly.

[*LORD TRUNKET bows, and exit.*

Mrs. Oak. I beg pardon, for giving your ladyship this trouble.

Lady F. I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs. Oakly.

Mrs. Oak. There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr. Russet——

Lady F. Mr. Russet!

Mrs. Oak. Yes, from Mr. Russet, madam; and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

Lady F. She is, indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine; but, after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

Mrs. Oak. Has she been so much to blame then?

Lady F. So much, madam!——Only judge for yourself.——Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent, in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hushed up that matter, for the honour of our family.—But she has run away from me too, madam:—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

Mrs. Oak. You surprise me. Indeed, her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst consequences.—But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

Lady F. I can't tell—I hope not——But, indeed, she's a strange girl. You know, madam, young women can't be too cautious in their conduct. She is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!

[*Alarmed.*

Lady F. If I was to say all I know——

Mrs. Oak. Why, sure your ladyship knows of nothing, that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr. Oakly. [In disorder.]

Lady F. Mr. Oakly!

Mrs. Oak. Mr. Oakly—no, not Mr. Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr. Oakly.

Lady F. Jealous of her husband! So, so! now I know my game. [Aside.]

Mrs. Oak. But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

Lady F. Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious;—letters and messages, to and fro, between her and I don't know who.—I suppose you know that Mr. Oakly's nephew has been here, madam?

Mrs. Oak. I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

Lady F. To wait on me!—The expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit.—My Lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and, as it would have been an advantageous match, I was glad of it: but, I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

Mrs. Oak. I am sorry, that any relation of mine should so far forget himself—

Lady F. It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary—and yet, after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

Mrs. Oak. Ha!

[Much alarmed.]

Lady F. She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr. Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-

between, than the lover.——Bless me, madam, you change colour!—you seem uneasy! What's the matter?

Mrs. Oak. Nothing,——madam,——nothing,——a little shocked, that my husband should behave so.

Lady F. Your husband, madam!

Mrs. Oak. His nephew, I mean.——His unpardonable rudeness—But I am not well——I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble—I'll take my leave.

Lady F. I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected, makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing——I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties—But, I think, nay, I am sure, it cannot be so—It is impossible! Don't let what I have said, have any effect on you.

Mrs. Oak. No, it has not—I have no idea of such a thing.—Your ladyship's most obedient—[Going, returns.]—But, sure, madam, you have not heard—or don't know any thing.——

Lady F. Come, come, Mrs. Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard. Only, be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

Mrs. Oak. I will——I am much obliged——But does it appear to your ladyship, then, that Mr. Oakly——

Lady F. No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—but I am a woman myself, have been married, and can't help feeling for you.—But don't be uneasy, there's nothing in't, I dare say.

Mrs. Oak. I think so.——Your ladyship's humble servant.

Lady F. Your servant, madam.——Pray don't be alarmed; I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

Mrs. Oak. Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy—Your most obedient. [*Exit.*

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband.—Mercy on the poor man!

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Bless me, my lord, I thought you was gone!

Lord T. Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted in my life, 'pon honour. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. How the silly creature took it.—Ha! ha! ha!

Lord T. Ha! ha! ha!—My dear Lady Free love, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of *esprit*, 'pon honour.

Lady F. A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

Both. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. But I must leave you—I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how you succeed in your secret expedition.

Lord T. That you may depend on.

Lady F. Remember, then, that to-morrow morning I expect to see you. At present, your lordship will excuse me.—Who's there? [*Calling to the SERVANTS.*] Send Epingle into my dressing-room. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—Mr. Oakly's House.

Enter HARRIET, following WILLIAM.

Har. Not at home! Are you sure, that Mrs. Oakly is not at home, sir?

Will. She is just gone out, madam.

Har. I have something of consequence——If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

Will. You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

Har. Sure, sir, if you was to let her know, that I had particular business——

Will. I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

Har. How unfortunate this is! What can I do?—Pray, sir, can I see Mr. Oakly, then?

Will. Yes, madam: I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

Har. Pray do, sir.

Will. Will you favour me with your name, madam?

Har. Be pleased, sir, to let him know, that a lady desires to speak with him.

Will. I shall, madam. *[Exit WILLIAM.]*

Har. I wish I could have seen Mrs. Oakly. What an unhappy situation am I reduced to!—I must now, however, solicit Mr. Oakly's protection; a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse.

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. *[At entering.]* Where is this lady?—*[Seeing her.]* Bless me, Miss Russet, is it you?—Was ever any thing so unlucky? *[Aside.]* Is it possible, madam, that I see you here?

Har. It is too true, sir; and the occasion, on which I am now to trouble you, is so much in need of an apology, that——

Oak. Pray make none, madam.—If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again!—

[Aside.]

Har. I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me.

Oak. I am not, madam.—I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

Har. I have no cause to accuse him.—But——

Oak. But what, madam? Pray be quick?—The very person in the world I would not have seen! [*Aside.*

Har. You seem uneasy, sir!

Oak. No, nothing at all—Pray go on, madam.

Har. I am at present, sir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

Oak. I'll do every thing in my power to serve you. I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray let me know the rest of your story.

Har. My story, sir, is very short. When I left my father's, I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation; where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago since your nephew rescued me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

Oak. He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St. Albans tavern, where he dines to-day.—But what are your commands for me, madam?

Har. The favour, sir, I would now request of you is, that you would suffer me to remain, for a few days, in your house.

Oak. Madam!

Har. And that, in the meantime, you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with Sir Harry Beagle.

Oak. This is the most perplexing situation!—Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

Har. It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but

too apt to censure, even without a cause: and if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr. Oakly in any other light than as your nephew.

Oak. What an unlucky circumstance!—Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you—but being in my house, creates a difficulty that—

Har. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you?

Oak. I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam, but I have particular family considerations, that—

Har. Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connections in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house!

Oak. Such connections, madam, would do me and all my family great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account.—What can I do?—Let me see—let me see—suppose———
[*Pausing.*]

Enter MRS. OAKLY behind, in a capuchin, tippet, &c.

Mrs. Oak. I am sure I heard the voice of a woman, conversing with my husband——Ha! [*Seeing HARRIET.*] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself—I'll listen.

Har. I see, sir, you are not inclined to serve me—good heaven! what am I reserved to?—Why, why did I leave my father's house, to expose myself to greater distresses?
[*Ready to weep.*]

Oak. I would do any thing for your sake: indeed I would. So pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in.

Mrs. Oak. So! so!

Har. What place can be so proper as your own house?

Oak. My dear madam, I——I——

Mrs. Oak. My dear madam!—Mighty well!—

Oak. Hush!—hark!—what noise—no—no—nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam, we may be interrupted.—The family considerations I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam;—and if you were to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine!

Har. My behaviour, sir!—

Oak. My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner, as not to give her suspicion.

Har. But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself—

Oak. Still that would not do, madam!—Why, this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

Har. What shall I do?—What will become of me?

Oak. Why, lookye, my dear madam, since my wife is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into the house. Nay, if I had not known she was gone out, just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here, even now. So we must manage as well as we can.—I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles, or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs. Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles, you know.

Mrs. Oak. Upon Charles!

Har. How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

Oak. Ruined! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again—Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

Mrs. Oak. [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr. Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed! And you, my dear madam, I'll——

Har. Madam, I don't understand——

Mrs. Oak. I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past.—You shall have a private lodging, miss!——It is the fittest place for you, I believe.—How dare you look me in the face?

Oak. For Heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent.—You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are a-talking to. This lady is a person of fashion.

Mrs. Oak. Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

Har. Dear madam; how can you imagine——

Oak. I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! but that won't do, sir!—Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles?——

Oak. Nay, be cool a moment.—You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady——

Mrs. Oak. I know it.

Oak. And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to——

Mrs. Oak. O, you deceitful man!——That trick is too stale to pass again with me.—It is plain now what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning.—But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

Oak. Fie! fie! my dear, she came on purpose to inquire for you.

Mrs. Oak. For me!——better and better!——Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit,

madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray, don't let me detain you.

Oak. For shame! for shame! Mrs. Oakly! How can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character?

Mrs. Oak. I have heard her character. Go, my fine runaway madam! Now you have eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go!—You sha'n't stay here, I promise you.

Oak. Pr'ythee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

Mrs. Oak. She sha'n't stay a minute.

Oak. She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year!—'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever, if I choose it.

Mrs. Oak. How!

Har. For heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frightened to death.

Oak. Don't be afraid, madam!—She shall stay, I insist upon it.

Rus. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

Har. O, my father! my father! [*Faints away.*]

Oak. See! she faints. [*Catching her.*]—Ring the bell! Who's there?

Mrs. Oak. What! take her into your arms too!—I have no patience.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Where is this—ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O, my dear Harriet! my child! my child!

Oak. Your coming so abruptly shocked her spirits. But she revives. How do you, madam?

Har. [*To RUSSET.*] O, sir!

Rus. O, my dear girl! how could you run away from your father, that loves you with such fondness!—But I was sure I should find you here—

Mrs. Oak. There—there!—sure he should find her here! Did I not tell you so?—Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base, underhand doings, with a gentleman's daughter?

Rus. Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour.—How durst you encourage my daughter to an elopement, and receive her in your house?

Mrs. Oak. There, mind that!—The thing is as plain as the light.

Oak. I tell you, you misunderstand——

Rus. Look you, Mr. Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront.—Zounds, sir, I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

Har. My dear sir, I can assure you——

Rus. Hold your tongue, girl! You'll put me in a passion.

Oak. Sir, this is all a mistake.

Rus. A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

Oak. Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

Mrs. Oak. Did not I hear you say, you would take her a lodging, a private lodging?

Oak. Yes, but that——

Rus. Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

Oak. Sir, I never troubled myself——

Mrs. Oak. Never troubled yourself!—Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

Oak. No.

Rus. Did not you send to meet her, when she came to town?

Oak. No.

Mrs. Oak. Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

Oak. No—no—no—I tell you, no.

Mrs. Oak. Yes—yes—yes—I tell you, yes.

Rus. Sha'n't I believe my own eyes?

Mrs. Oak. Sha'n't I believe my own ears?

Oak. I tell you, you are both deceived.

Rus. Zounds, sir, I'll have satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

Oak. 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike, I think.—I wish you were married to one another, with all my heart.

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! mighty well!

Rus. I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

Oak. Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine! Come along, sir! Leave that lady with her father. Now she is in the properest hands.

Oak. I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] One word with you, sir!—The height of your passion, and Mrs. Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please.

Rus. Yes, yes; I'll have satisfaction.—So, madam! I have found you at last.—You have made a fine confusion here.

Har. I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

Rus. Innocent!—What business had you to be running hither after—

Har. My dear sir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

Rus. Zounds, girl, don't put me in a passion!—You know I love you—but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[*CHARLES, singing without.*] Hey day! what now?

After a noise without, enter CHARLES, drunk.

Charles. *But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,
And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing.*

[Singing.]

What's here? a woman? Harriet! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriet! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last——when I was tired——and weary——and disappointed——why, then, the honest Major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers. [Running up to her.]

Rus. Stand off!——How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zounds, sir, I'll be the death of you.

Charles. Ha! 'Squire Russet too!——You jolly old cock, how do you do?——But Harriet! my dear girl! [Taking hold of her.] My life, my soul, my——

Rus. Let her go, sir——come away, Harriet!——Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder. [Pulling her.]

Har. There needs no violence to tear me from a man, who could disguise himself in such a gross manner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress.

[Disengages herself, and exit with RUSSET.]

Charles. Only hear me, sir——madam!——my dear Harriet——Mr. Russet——gone!——she's gone!——and, 'egad, in very ill-humour, and in very bad company!——I'll go after her—but hold!——I shall only make it worse—as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?——Who would have thought of finding her in my own house?——My head turns round with conjectures.—I believe I am drunk—very drunk——so, 'egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then inquire the meaning of all this. For,

I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.

[Exit, singing.]

ACT IV.

Scene I.—Oakly's House.

Enter CHARLES and MAJOR OAKLY.

Maj. Poor Charles! What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

Charles. And I would give the world to have been any where else.—May wine be my poison, if ever I am drunk again!

Maj. Ay, ay, so every man says, the next morning.

Charles. Where, where can she be? Her father would hardly carry her back to Lady Freelove's, and he has no house in town himself, nor Sir Harry—I don't know what to think—I'll go in search of her, though I don't know where to direct myself.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

Charles. Don't trouble me—I'll see nobody—I'm not at home—

Will. The gentleman says, he has very particular business, and he must see you.

Charles. What's his name? Who did you say?

Will. Captain O'Cutter, sir.

Charles. Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, Major?

Maj. Not I—But you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

Charles. He can have no business that need be a secret to you.—Desire the Captain to walk up.

[Exit WILLIAM.]

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

O'Cut. Jontlemen, your sarvant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, Esq.

Charles. Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

O'Cut. Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but as I was to let nobody know it, I can't mention it till you clear the decks, 'fait.

[*Pointing to the MAJOR.*

Charles. This gentleman, sir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

O'Cut. O, if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. It's only about your deciding a deferance with my Lord Trinket. He wants to show you a little warm work; and, as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter. [*Giving a letter.*

Maj. How, sir, a challenge!

O'Cut. Yes, 'fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and, if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

Charles. [*Reading.*] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [*Aside.*

Maj. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.—A rare fellow this! [*Aside.*]—Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, sir?

O'Cut. Indeed, and I am; I love it better than grog.

Maj. But pray, sir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

O'Cut. O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what it's about, you know? so we do but tilt a little.

Maj. What, fight, and not know for what?

O'Cut. When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

Maj. I fancy, sir, a duel's a common breakfast with you. I'll warrant now, you have been engaged in many such affairs.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I have: sea or land, it's all one to little Terence O'Cutter.—When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a tousand pounds; I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macquire; tree about politics; and one about the playhouse in Smock Alley. But, upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done noting at all at all.

Charles. This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*]—Will you be so kind, sir, [*To O'CUTTER,*] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him, that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

O'Cut. Indeed, and I will.—Arrah, my dear, won't you come too? [*To MAJOR OAKLY.*]

Maj. Depend upon it, Captain.—A very extraordinary fellow! [*Aside.*]

Charles. Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*]—I think, the time, sir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a——

O'Cut. You say right——Six o'clock.

Charles. And the place—a—a—is——I think, behind Montague House.

O'Cut. No, my dear!——Avast, by the Ring in Hyde Park, 'fait——I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

Charles. True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

O'Cut. Devil burn me, nor I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason—And so, my dear, your sarvant.—You'll not forget to come, my dear? [*Exit.*]

Maj. Ha! ha! ha! What a fellow!—He loves fighting like a game cock.

Charles. O uncle! the luckiest thing in the world!

Maj. What, to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune.

Charles. Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriet!—She is at an inn in Holborn, Major?

Maj. Ay! how do you know?

Charles. Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain, has delivered me a wrong letter.

Maj. A wrong letter!

Charles. Yes, a letter from Lord Trinket to Lady Freelove.

Maj. The devil! What are the contents?

Charles. The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn: and, besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning, according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriet.

Maj. So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

Charles. There! read, read, man! [*Giving the letter.*]

Maj. [*Reading.*] Um—um—um—Very fine! And what do you purpose doing?

Charles. To go thither immediately.

Maj. Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

Charles. No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

Maj. You'll manage this affair like a boy, now—Go on rashly with noise and bustle, and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

Charles. No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.*—Leave my chariot at some distance—Proceed pru-

dently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge, but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle!

[Exit hastily.]

Maj. I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither. — Charles may easily outwit him. Harkye, William!

[At seeing WILLIAM at some distance.]

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir!

Maj. Where's my brother?

Will. In his study, sir.

Maj. Is he alone?

Will. Yes, sir.

Maj. And how is he, William?

Will. Pretty well, I believe, sir.

Maj. Ay, ay, but is he in good humour, or——

Will. I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir.

[Exit.]

Maj. Well said, William!——No bad hint for me, perhaps!——What a strange world we live in! No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily.——Ah! if he had but half my spirit!——And yet he don't want it neither——But I know his temper——He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy, and odds and ends of sentences——I must live in peace——Patience is the best remedy——Any thing for a quiet life! and so on——However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or it's all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll even set it forwards on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately;

or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!——'Sdeath, what a pity it is that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a bachelor. [Exit.

Scene II.—The Bull and Gate Inn.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. What will become of me? Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! so given up to excesses! And yet—I am ashamed to own it even to myself——I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my hand to Sir Harry——But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Sir H. Your servant, miss!——What! Not speak!——Bashful, mayhap—Why then I will—Lookye, miss, I am a man of few words—What signifies haggling? It looks just like a dealer.——What d'ye think of me for a husband?——I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes—Rum all over, damme.

Har. Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

Sir H. English! Why so I do—and good plain English too.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—That's English—e'nt it?——I know none of your French lingo, none of your *parlyvoos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'squire says, you shall marry me.

Har. What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [Aside.]——I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg——

Sir H. Better! No, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so.—You're a fine thing—Your points are all good.

Har. Sir Harry! Sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I never will be your wife. And if you have a real regard for me, and my happiness, you will give up all pretension to me. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

Sir H. Hey! how! what! be off!—Why, it's a match, miss?—It's done and done on both sides.

Har. For heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me.—I never can be prevailed on—indeed I can't—

Sir H. What, make a match and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing—Play or pay all the world over.

Har. I am determined not to marry you, at all events.

Sir H. But your father's determined you shall, miss.—So the odds are on my side.—I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

Har. Your horse! sir—d'ye take me for—but I forgive you.—I beseech you, come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

Sir H. I can't be off.

Har. Let me intreat you.

Sir H. I tell you, it's impossible.

Har. Pray, pray do, sir.

Sir H. I can't, damme.

Har. I beseech you. [SIR HARRY whistles.] How! laughed at?

Sir H. Will you marry me, dear Ally, Ally Croker?

[Singing.

Har. Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch—You! [Walks about.

Sir H. A fine going thing——She has a deal of foot——treads well upon her pasterns——goes above her ground——

Har. Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as if I were your horse?

Sir H. Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

Har. And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

Sir H. Mayhap so.——But what signifies talking to you?——The 'squire shall know your tricks——He'll doctor you.——I'll go and talk to him.

Har. Go any where, so that you go from me.

Sir H. He'll break you in—If you wont go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb——He'll break you, damme. [*Exit.*

Har. A wretch!——How much trouble has this odious fellow caused both to me and my poor father!—I never disobeyed him before, and my denial now makes him quite unhappy. In any thing else I would be all submission; and even now, while I dread his rage, my heart bleeds for his uneasiness——I wish I could resolve to obey him.

Enter Russer.

Rus. Are not you a sad girl! a perverse, stubborn, obstinate——

Har. My dear sir——

Rus. Lookye, Harriet, don't speak,——you'll put me in a passion——Will you have him?——Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak?—Will you have him?

Har. Dearest sir, there is nothing in the world else——

Rus. Why there!—there!——Lookye there!——Zounds, you shall have him——Hussy, you shall have him——You shall marry him to-night——Did not you promise to receive him civilly?—How came you to affront him?

Har. Sir, I did receive him very civilly; but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable——

Rus. Insolent!—Zounds, I'll blow his brains out.——Insolent to my dear Harriet!—A rogue, a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie—He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him?——Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. If you have any love for me, sir——

Rus. Love for you!—You know I love you—You know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness.——I would not force you, if I did not love you—Don't I want you to be happy?——But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rakehelly, drunken——

Har. Release me from Sir Harry, and if I ever marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

Rus. I *will* renounce you, unless you'll have Sir Harry.

Har. Consider, my dear sir, you'll make me miserable. I would die to please you, but cannot prostitute my hand to a man my heart abhors.——Absolve me from this hard command, and in every thing else it will be happiness to obey you.

Rus. You'll break my heart, Harriet, you'll break my heart——Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county?—That will make you happy.——Don't all the pale-faced girls in the country long to get him?—And yet you are so perverse, and wayward, and stubborn——Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. For heaven's sake, sir——

Rus. Hold your tongue, Harriet!—I'll hear none of your nonsense.—You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him—He shall marry you this very night—I'll go for a license and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? An't I your father? Have not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

Har. Sir!—

Rus. I won't hear a word. You shall have him.

[*Exit.*

Har. Sir!—Hear me!—but one word!—He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You *shall* have him! Oh that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments! And yet I pity him, while he afflicts me.—He upbraided me with Charles, his wildness and intemperance—Alas! but too justly—I see that he is wedded to his excesses; and I ought to conquer an affection for him, which will only serve to make me unhappy.

Enter CHARLES, in a frock, &c.

Ha! What do I see!

[*Screaming.*

Charles. Peace, my love!—My dear life, make no noise!—I have been hovering about the house this hour—I just now saw your father and Sir Harry go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet.

Har. You have given yourself, sir, a great deal of needless trouble. I did not expect or hope for the favour of such a visit.

Charles. O my dear Harriet, your words and looks cut me to the soul. You can't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night—But may I perish, if my joy at having delivered you from a villain was not the cause! My transport more than half intoxicated me, wine made an easy conquest over me.—I tremble

to think lest I should have behaved in such a manner as you cannot pardon.

Har. Whether I pardon you or no, sir, is a matter of mighty little consequence.

Charles. Consider, my Harriet, the peculiarity of your situation; besides, I have reason to fear other designs against you.

Har. From other designs I can be no where so secure as with my father.

Charles. Consider, my angel!——

Har. I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

Charles. My conduct!—Vexation! 'Sdeath!——But then, my dear Harriet, the danger you are in, the necessity——

Enter CHAMBERMAID.

Chamb. O law, ma'am!——Such a terrible accident!——As sure as I am here, there's a pressgang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an 'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a housekeeper.

Har. Seized by a pressgang! impossible.

Charles. Oh, now the design comes out.——But I'll balk his lordship.

Chamb. Lack-a-daisy, ma'am, what can we do? There is master, and John Ostler, and Bootcatcher, all gone a'ter 'em.——There is such an uproar as never was!

[*Exit.*

Har. If I thought this was your contrivance, sir, I would never speak to you again.

Charles. I would sooner die than be guilty of it.—This is Lord Trinket's doing, I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning. [*HARRIET screams.*] Ha! here he comes. Nay then, it's plain enough. Don't be frightened, my

love! I'll protect you.—But now I must desire you to follow my directions.

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Lord T. Now, madam.—Pox on't, he here again! —Nay, then, [*drawing.*] come, sir! You're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling.

[*Going to make a pass at CHARLES.*

Charles. Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms. [*Producing a pistol.*] If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls through your lordship's head.

Lord T. How? what's this? pistols!

Charles. At your lordship's service.—Sword and pistol, my lord.—Those, you know, are our weapons.—If this misses, I have the fellow to it in my pocket.—Don't be frightened, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations, but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

Har. Cruel Charles! you know I must go with you, now.

Charles. A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*

Lord T. Sir!—'Sdeath!—Madam——!

Charles. A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*

Lord T. But, sir!—Mr. Oakly!

Charles. I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now.—A little more that way, if you please. [*Waving.*]—You know where I live.—If you have any commands for Miss Russet, you will hear of her too at my house.—Nay, keep back my lord. [*Presenting.*] Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

[*Exit with HARRIET.*

Lord T. [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*]—I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour.—So I have been concerting this deep

scheme, merely to serve him.—Oh, the devil take such intrigues, and all silly country girls, that can give up a man of quality and figure, for a fellow that nobody knows.
[Exit.]

ACT V.

Scene I.—Lady Freelove's House.

Enter LORD TRINKET, LADY FREELOVE, with a letter, and CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lord T. Was ever any thing so unfortunate! Plague on't, Captain, how could you make such a strange blunder?

O'Cut. I never tought of a blunder. I was to daliver two letters, and if I gave them one apiece, I thought it would do.

Lady F. And so, my lord, the ingenious Captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here has brought me a challenge.

Lord T. Ridiculous! Never was any thing so *mal-apropos*.—Did you read the direction, Captain?

O'Cut. Who, me!—Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

Lord T. 'Sdeath! how provoking! When I had secured the servants, and got all the people out of the way—When every thing was *en train*.

Lady F. Nay, never despair, my lord! I've hit upon a method to set every thing to right again.

Lord T. How? how? my dear Lady Freelove, how?

Lady F. Suppose then your lordship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confinement; make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

Lord T. Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

O'Cut. Has your lordship any occasion for my sarvice in this expedition?

Lord T. O no:—Only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear Captain.

O'Cut. With all my heart, 'faint. But you are all wrong:—this will not signify a brass farding. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt eel, I warrant you.—But upon my credit, there's noting to be done without a little tilting. [Exit.

Lord T. But where shall I carry them, when I have delivered them?

Lady F. To Mr. Oakly's, by all means. You may be sure my niece is there.

Lord T. To Mr. Oakly's!—Why, does your ladyship consider? 'Tis going directly in the fire of the enemy—throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

Lady F. So much the better. Face your enemies:—nay, you shall outface them too. No, no,——positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

Lord T. Well, I'll go, 'pon honour—and if I could depend on your ladyship as a *corps de reserve*—

Lady F. I'll certainly meet you there. You may depend on me. [Exit LORD TRINKET.]—So, here is fine work! this artful little hussy has been too much for us all. Well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr. Oakly's, as I have promised, and if it appears practicable, I will forward Lord Trinket's match; but if I find, that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wise father, or her ridiculous self has provided for her. [Exit.

*Scene II.—Mrs. Oakly's Dressing Room.**Enter MRS. OAKLY.*

Mrs. Oak. This is worse and worse!—He never held me so much in contempt before.—To go out without speaking to me, or taking the least notice.—I am obliged to the Major for this.—How could he take him out? and how could Mr. Oakly go with him?—

Enter TOILET.

Mrs. Oak. Well, Toilet.

Toil. My master is not come back yet, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Toil. I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

Mrs. Oak. Why don't you know?—You know nothing.—But I warrant you know well enough, if you would tell.—You shall never persuade me but you knew of Mr. Oakly's going out to-day.

Toil. I wish I may die, ma'am, upon my honour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew nothing in the world of the matter, no more than the child unborn. There is Mr. Paris, my master's gentleman, knows—

Mrs. Oak. What does he know?

Toil. That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

Mrs. Oak. Where is Paris? What is he doing?

Toil. He is in my master's room, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Bid him come here.

Toil. Yes, ma'am. *[Exit.*

Mrs. Oak. He is certainly gone after this young flirt.—His confidence and the Major's insolence provoke me beyond expression.

Enter TOILET and PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. *Il est sorti.* He is gone out.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Par. Ah, madame, *je n'en sçai rien.* I know nothing of it.

Mrs. Oak. Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

Par. I dress him—*Je ne m'en soucie pas du plus*—He go where he will—I have no business with it.

Mrs. Oak. Yes, you should have told me—that was your business—and if you don't mind your business better, you shan't stay here, I can tell you, sir.

Par. *Voilà! quelque chose d'extraordinaire!*

Mrs. Oak. Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and inquire—go—and bring me word where he is gone.

Par. I don't know what I am do. — I'll ask John—

Mrs. Oak. Bid John come to me.

Par. *De tout mon cœur.*—*Jean! ici! Jean*—speak my lady. *[Exit.*

Mrs. Oak. Impudent fellow! His insolent gravity and indifference is insupportable—Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Where's John? Why don't he come? Why do you stand with your hands before you? Why don't you fetch him?

Toil. Yes, ma'am, I'll go this minute.—O here, John! my lady wants you.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs. Oak. Where's your master?

John. Gone out, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Why did not you go with him?

John. Because he went out in the Major's chariot, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Where did they go to?

John. To the Major's, I suppose, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Suppose! Don't you know?

John. I believe so, but can't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Believe, and suppose!—and don't know, and can't tell!—You are all fools.—Go about your business. [*JOHN going.*] Come here. [*Returns.*] Go to the Major's,—no,—it does not signify—go along—[*JOHN going.*]—Yes, harkye, [*Returns.*] go to the Major's, and see if your master is there.

John. Give your compliments, madam?

Mrs. Oak. My compliments, blockhead! Get along [*JOHN going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Can't you go to the Major's, and bring me word if Mr. Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

John. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Well, why don't you go, then? And make haste back.—And, d'ye hear, John.

[*JOHN going, returns.*]

John. Madam!

Mrs. Oak. Nothing at all—go along—[*JOHN goes.*] How uneasy Mr. Oakly makes me!—Harke, John!

[*JOHN returns.*]

John. Madam!

Mrs. Oak. Send the porter here.

John. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*]

Toil. So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't.—[*Aside.*]—Will your ladyship choose to dress?

Mrs. Oak. Pr'ythee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.—Where is the porter? why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning—

Enter JOHN.

John. Madam, my master is this moment returned, with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

Mrs. Oak. Very well. [*Exit JOHN.*] Returned—yes,

truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down, and show them I have too much spirit to endure such usage.—[*Going.*] Or, stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Order the coach; I'll go out. [*TOILET going.*] Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them——No——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Order me a boiled chicken——I'll not go down to dinner——I'll dine in my own room, and sup there——I'll not see his face these three days. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III—Another Room.

Enter OAKLY, MAJOR OAKLY, CHARLES, and HARRIET.

Charles. My dear Harriet, do not make yourself so uneasy.

Har. Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

Oak. Be comforted, madam; we shall soon hear of Mr. Russet, and all will be well, I dare say.

Har. You are too good to me, sir; I shall never forgive myself, for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

Maj. Don't mind that, madam: they'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people——'Sdeath, here she is!—No,—it's only Mrs. Toilet.

Enter TOILET.

Oak. Well, Toilet, what now? [*TOILET whispers.*] Not well?—Can't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?—Harkye, brother, what shall I do?

Maj. If you go, you are undone.

Har. Go, sir, go to Mrs. Oakly——Indeed you had better——

Maj. 'Sdeath, brother, don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill humour——

Oak. No, I'll not go—Tell her, I have company, and we shall be glad to see her here. [Exit TOILET.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. Suppose I go and watch how she proceeds?

Maj. What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? are you mad?

Oak. By no means go to her—I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue*, in my study, and observe her motions.

Maj. I don't like this pitiful ambuscade work—this bush fighting. Why can't you stay here?—Ay, ay!—I know how it will be——She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

Oak. You shall find that you are mistaken, Major. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

Maj. You talk this well, brother.

Oak. I'll do it well, brother.

Maj. If you don't, you are undone.

Oak. Never fear, never fear. [Exit.

Maj. Well, Charles.

Charles. I can't bear to see my Harriet so uneasy. I'll go immediately in quest of Mr. Russet. Perhaps I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

Rus. [Without.] Here! Yes, yes, I know she's here well enough. Come along, Sir Harry, come along.

Har. He's here!—My father, I know his voice. Where is Mr. Oakly? O, now, good sir, [To the MAJOR.] do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

EMET RUSSET, LORD TRESKET, and SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Lord T. There, sir—I told you it was so!

Rus. Ay, ay, it is too plain——O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement!—And at last to have your father carried off by violence! to endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry, I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

Charles. I can assure you, sir, that your daughter is entirely——

Rus. You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind——That has set my own child against me——

Charles. If you will but hear me, sir——

Rus. I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

Maj. Nay, Mr. Russet, hear reason. If you will but have patience——

Rus. I'll have no patience, I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry Sir Harry to-night.

Lord T. That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr. Russet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family——

Rus. What care I for rank and family? I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of quality. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, Sir Harry; she shall marry you to-night.

Maj. Only three words, Mr. Russet.——

Rus. Why don't the booby take her?

Sir H. Hold hard! Hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent; Hold hard! I say, hold hard!—Harkye, 'Squire Russet.

Rus. Well? what now?

Sir H. It was proposed, you know, to match me with Minn Harriet——But she can't take kindly to me.——When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off,

you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse, Nabob.

Rus. Swopped her? Swopped my daughter for a horse! Zounds, sir, what d'ye mean?

Sir H. Mean? Why I mean to be off, to be sure—It won't do—I tell you, it won't do——First of all I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender—I have wasted three stone at least——If I could have rid my match it would not have grieved me——. And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

Rus. The devil take Nabob, and yourself, and Lord Trinket, and—

Lord T. *Pardon! je vous demande pardon, Monsieur Russet, 'pon honour.*

Rus. Death and the devil! I shall go distracted! My daughter plotting against me—the——

Maj. Come, come, Mr. Russet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

Sir H. Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

Rus. Well, sir—What d'ye say?—Speak——I don't know what to do.

Maj. I'll speak the truth, let who will be offended by it.—I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr. Russet. From his lordship's behaviour at Lady Free-love's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude that he would stick at no measures to carry his point—there's proof presumptive.—But, sir, we can give you proof positive too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

Rus. Hey! how?

Lord T. Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

Maj. Gospel, every word on't.

Charles. This letter will convince you, sir! In consequence of what happened at Lady Freelove's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge; but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

Lord T. Forgery from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

Maj. Truth upon my honour.—But read, read, Mr. Russet, read, and be convinced.

Rus. Let me see—let me see—[*Reading.*]—Um—um—um—um—um—so, so;—um—um—um—damnation!—*Wish me success, obedient slave—Trinket—*Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

Lord T. When you are cool, Mr. Russet, I will explain this matter to you.

Rus. Cool! 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again—I'll be revenged—So my Harriet, my dear girl, is innocent at last. Say so, my Harriet; tell me, you are innocent. [*Embracing her.*]

Har. I am, indeed, sir, and happy beyond expression at your being convinced of it.

Rus. I am glad on't—I am glad on't—I believe you, Harriet!—You was always a good girl.

Maj. So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such lords and baronets—Come, sir, finish every thing handsomely at once.—Come, Charles will have a handsome fortune.

Rus. Marry!—She durst not do it.

Maj. Consider, sir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turtles—and may be very happy.

Rus. Well, well—since things are so—I love my girl.—Harkye, Young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

Maj. I'll cut his throat if he don't.

Charles. Do not doubt it, sir! my Harriet has reformed me altogether.

Rus. Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now there's an end on't.

Sir H. So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing, damme.

Lord T. *N'importe.*

Sir H. [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my lord may be for hedging off, mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour. [*Exit.*]

Enter LADY FREELOVE.

Lady F. My dear Miss Russet, you'll excuse—

Charles. Mrs. Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

Lady F. Married?

Har. Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

Lady F. I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr. Oakly.—I wish you joy, Mr. Russet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

Maj. How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*]

Lady F. Lord Trinket here too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

Lord T. Your ladyship's most obedient slave.

[*Bowing.*]

Lady F. You seem grave, my lord! Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr. Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

Lord T. Here has been a small fracas, to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Blown! what do you mean, my lord?

Lord T. Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to CHARLES.*]

—and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it—that's all.

Lady F. You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary style—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me.—Miss Russet will justify me sufficiently.

Maj. Had not your ladyship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The letter, Charles!—Out with it this instant!

Charles. Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.—Mr. Russet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

Rus. [Reading.] *To the Right Honourable Lady Free-love*——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you, then, for the insult that has been offered me!

Lady F. What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr. Russet, are of a nature, that——

Rus. Fine obligations! I dare say, I am partly obliged to you, too, for the attempt on my daughter by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zounds, madam! these are injuries never to be forgiven——They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the world shall know them—Zounds!—I'll——

Lady F. Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why, really, Mr. Russet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably.—How can you be so vulgar?—I see the meaning of this low malice—But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your

simple girl will be the sufferers.—I had some thoughts of introducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. *[Exit.]*

Rus. Zounds, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

Lord T. Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*—But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *tapage* about nothing at all?—If Mademoiselle Harriet had rather be Mrs. Oakly than Lady Trinket—Why—I wish her joy—that's all.—Mr. Russet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr. Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, *[To HARRIET.]* of the gentleman—And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour! *[Exit.]*

Rus. There's a fine fellow of a lord now! The devil's in your London folks of the first fashion, as you call them. They will rob you of your estate, debauch your daughter, or lie with your wife—and all as if they were doing you a favour—'pon honour!—

Maj. Hey! what now? *[Bell rings violently.]*

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. D'ye hear, Major, d'ye hear?

Maj. Zounds! what a clatter!—She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

Oak. My observations, since I left you, have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good humour, and her ill humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are all calculated to play upon me.

Maj. Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all—they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath. Any thing to get the better of us.

Oak. She is in all moods at present, I promise you—There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fret-

ting, and despatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now again she writes a note to intreat—then Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!—

Maj. It will soon drive this way then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

Oak. Retreat!—Retreat!—No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

Maj. Ay, ay!—keep your ground!—fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress—

Oak. Here she is, by heavens!—now, brother!

Maj. And now, brother!—Now or never!

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. I think, Mr. Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house—I see what you aim at, and will be aforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

Oak. True, my love: I knew you would not think of dining in your own chamber alope, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought, to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

Mrs. Oak. Excellent raillery! Lookye, Mr. Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

Oak. My dear, consider where you are—

Mrs. Oak. You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

Oak. Before all this company ! Fie !

Mrs. Oak. But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it, to support my due authority—as for you, Major Oakly——

Aj. Hey-day ! What have I done ?

Mrs. Oak. I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people——and you, sir——

Oak. Nay, but my dear !——

Mrs. Oak. Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff.

Oak. Lord, lord !

Mrs. Oak. You and your wise counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me——

Oak. Was ever any thing——

Mrs. Oak. But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

Oak. You had better learn to govern yourself, by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous. Did ever any body see so much fury and violence ; affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what ? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam ! at these years you ought to know better.

Mrs. Oak. At these years !——Very fine !——Am I to be talked to in this manner ?

Oak. Talked to !——Why not ?——You have talked to me long enough——almost talked me to death——and I have taken it all, in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you ; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolved to be master of my own house.

Mrs. Oak. So, so !——Master, indeed !——Yes, sir ;

and you'll take care to have mistresses enough too, I warrant you.

Oak. Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!—And do you think I am such a tame fool, as to sit quietly and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour——You shall find that I have a spirit——

Oak. Of the devil.

Mrs. Oak. Intolerable!—You shall find, then, that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company.—You shan't see a single soul for this month.

Oak. 'Sdeath, madam, but I will!—I'll keep open house for a year.—I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr. Oakly's rout!—All the world will come—and I'll go among the world too—I'll be mewed up no longer.

Mrs. Oak. Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured.—Lookye, Mr. Oakly——

Oak. And lookye, Mrs. Oakly, I will have my own way.

Mrs. Oak. Nay, then, let me tell you, sir——

Oak. And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed—I won't be made a fool.

Mrs. Oak. Why, you won't let me speak.

Oak. Because you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you shan't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O, you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman——such usage to your poor wife!——you'll be the death of her.

Oak. She shan't be the death of me, I am determined.

Mrs. Oak. That it should ever come to this!——To be contradicted—[*Sobbing.*]—insulted—abused—hated——'tis too much—my heart will burst with—oh—oh!——

[*Falls into a fit.* **HARRIET, CHARLES, &c.** run to her assistance.

Oak. [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

Har. Sir, Mrs. Oakly——

Charles. For heaven's sake, sir, she will be——

Oak. Let her alone—let her alone.

Har. Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may——

Oak. I don't care——Let her alone, I say.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] O, you monster!—you villain!—you base man!——Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

Oak. Bless me! madam, your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

Mrs. Oak. Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir——

Oak. *Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs. Oak. What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice——

Oak. *Toll-de-rol loll-de-roll loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs. Oak. I shall burst with anger.—Have a care, sir; you may repent this.—Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge!

[*Going.*

Har. [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

Har. Let me beseech you, madam.

Maj. Courage, brother! you have done wonders.

[*Apart.*

Oak. I think she'll have no more fits.

[*Apart,*

Har. Stay, madam—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in

great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave, then——

Mrs. Oak. I did not expect, indeed, to have found you here again. But however——

Har. I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. May be so—I cannot argue with you.

Charles. Pray, madam, hear her——for my sake——for your own——dear madam!

Mrs. Oak. Well, well——proceed.

Har. I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

Rus. I was in a bloody passion, to be sure, madam! ——The letter was not over civil, I believe.—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl. But it's all over now, and so——

Mrs. Oak. You was here yesterday, sir?

Rus. Yes; I came after Harriet. I thought I should find my young madam with my young sir, here.

Mrs. Oak. With Charles, did you say, sir?

Rus. Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

Mrs. Oak. I fear I have been to blame. [*Aside.*

Rus. I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

Har. And the abrupt manner, in which I came into it, demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

Mrs. Oak. How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*]——But did not I overhear you and Mr. Oakly——

[*To HARRIET.*

Har. Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

Charles. To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr. Russet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

Mrs. Oak. I have no further doubt—I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you—You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late; Mr. Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed. [Weeping.

Oak. I must go to her—

[Apart.

Maj. Not yet!—Not yet!

[Apart.

Har. Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions; I am sure Mr. Oakly loves you most affectionately.

Oak. I can hold no longer. [Going to her.] My affection for you, madam, is as warm as ever. My constrained behaviour has cut me to the soul—For it was all constrained—and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

Mrs. Oak. O, Mr. Oakly, how have I exposed myself! What low arts has my jealousy induced me to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

Oak. Forgive you!—This change transports me! —Brother! Mr. Russet! Charles! Harriet! give me joy!—I am the happiest man in the world!

Maj. Joy, much joy, to you both! though, by the by, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you, I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

Mrs. Oak. I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

Oak. Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

Mrs. Oak. I have not merited this kindness, but it shall hereafter be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

THE END.

THE
WEST INDIAN ;

A COMEDY.

BY
RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

~

10

VOL. I.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STOCKWELL.
BELCOUR.
MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY.
CHARLES DUDLEY.
VARLAND.
STUKELY.
FULMER.

LADY RUSPORT.
CHARLOTTE RUSPORT.
LOUISA DUDLEY.
MRS. FULMER.
LUCY.

SCENE—London.

THE
WEST INDIAN.

ACT I.

Scene I.—A Merchant's Compting House.

In an inner room, set off by glass-doors, are discovered several CLERKS, employed at their desks. A writing table in the front room. STOCKWELL is discovered, reading a letter ;—STUKELY comes gently out of the back room, and observes him some time before he speaks.

Stuke. He seems disordered : something in that letter ; and, I'm afraid, of an unpleasant sort.—He has many ventures of great account at sea : a ship richly freighted for Barcelona ; another for Lisbon ; and others expected from Cadiz, of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him—Sir—Mr. Stockwell !

Stock. Stukely !—Well, have you shipped the cloths ?

Stuke. I have, sir ; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice ; the assortments are all compared : Mr. Traffic will give you the policy upon 'Change.

Stock. 'Tis very well—lay these papers by ; and no more of business for awhile. Shut the door, Stukely ; I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me ; a matter of most intimate concern lies on my

mind, and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbosom myself to you ; I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West Indian I have so long been expecting—you know whom I mean ?

Stuke. Yes, sir ; Mr. Belcour, the young gentleman who inherited old Belcour's great estate in Jamaica.

Stock. Hush ! not so loud ; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London ; part of his baggage is already arrived, and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son ?

Stuke. Your son !

Stock. Yes, sir, my only son. Early in life, I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica as his clerk ; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself ; the mother of this gentleman : it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections ; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married ; the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

Stuke. That event surely discovered your connexion.

Stock. You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England ; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time her father returned, having left me here ; in one of those favourable moments that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced ; from that instant he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

Stuke. And did you never reveal this secret, either to old Belcour, or your son ?

Stock. Never.

Stuke. Therein you surprise me ; a merchant of your eminence, and a member of the British Parliament, might surely aspire, without offence, to the daughter of a planter. In this case too, natural affection would prompt to a discovery.

Stock. Your remark is obvious ; nor could I have persisted in this painful silence, but in obedience to the dying injunctions of a beloved wife. This letter, you found me reading, conveyed those injunctions to me ; it was dictated in her last illness, and almost in the article of death ; (you'll spare me the recital of it) she there conjures me, in terms as solemn as they are affecting, never to reveal the secret of our marriage, or withdraw my son, while her father survived.

Stuke. But on what motives did your unhappy lady found these injunctions ?

Stock. Principally, I believe, from apprehension on my account, lest old Belcour, on whom at her decease I wholly depended, should withdraw his protection. My judgment has not suffered by the event : old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

Stuke. Now then you are no longer bound to secrecy.

Stock. True : but before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition : this can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint ; by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

Enter a SAILOR, ushering in several BLACK SERVANTS, carrying portmanteaus, trunks, &c.

Sail. 'Save your honour ! is your name Stockwell, pray ?

Stock. It is.

Sail. Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't

please you : there's another cargo not far a-stern of us ; and the coxswain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

Stock. Pr'ythee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of ; has Mr. Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts ?

Sail. No, lord love him ; no, not he ; let me see ; there's two green monkeys, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog ; that's all.

Stock. Is that all ?

Sail. Yes, your honour : yes, that's all ; bless his heart, a' might have brought over the whole island if he would ; a' didn't leave a dry eye in it.

Stock. Indeed ! Stukely, show them where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

Sail. Come, bear a hand, my lads, bear a hand.

[*Exit with STUKELY and SERVANTS.*]

Stock. If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place : he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow ; 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word. [*Exit.*]

Scene II.—A Drawing Room.

A FOOTMAN discovered setting the chairs by, &c.

Enter HOUSEKEEPER.

Housek. Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian ! see what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out ; seven and nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner, as he calls it : why, if my Lord Mayor was expected, there could'nt be a greater to-do about him.

Foot. I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus, he has sent hither.

An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

Housek. A fine pickle he'll put the house into: had he been master's own son, and a christian Englishman, there could not be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call them.

Foot. No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say, he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. But I see my master's coming. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter STOCKWELL, followed by a SERVANT.

Stock. Where is Mr. Belcour? Who brought this note from him?

Serv. A waiter from the London Tavern, sir; he says, the young gentleman is just dressed, and will be with you directly.

Stock. Show him in when he arrives.

Serv. I shall, sir. I'll have a peep at him first, however; I've a great mind to see this outlandish spark. The sailor fellow says, he'll make rare doings amongst us. [*Aside.*]

Stock. You need not wait; leave me. [*Exit SERVANT.*]
Let me see. [*Reads.*]

SIR,

I write to you under the hands of the hair dresser; as soon as I have made myself decent, and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have the honour of paying you my devoirs.

Yours,

BELCOUR.

He writes at his ease; for he's unconscious to whom his letter is addressed; but what a palpitation does it throw my heart into; a father's heart! 'Tis an affecting interview; when my eyes meet a son, whom yet they never saw, where shall I find constancy to support it? Should

he resemble his mother, I am overthrown. All the letters I have had from him, (for I industriously drew him into a correspondence with me) bespeak him of quick and ready understanding. All the reports I ever received, give me favourable impressions of his character, wild, perhaps, as the manner of his country is, but, I trust, not frantic or unprincipled.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, the foreign gentleman is come.

Enter another SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Belcour.

Enter BELCOUR.

Stock. Mr. Belcour, I am rejoiced to see you; you are welcome to England!

Bel. I thank you heartily, good Mr. Stockwell; you and I have long conversed at a distance; now we are met; and the pleasure this meeting gives me, amply compensates for the perils I have run through in accomplishing it.

Stock. What perils, Mr. Belcour? I could not have thought you would have made a bad passage at this time o'year.

Bel. Nor did we: courier like, we came posting to your shores, upon the pinions of the swiftest gales that ever blew; 'tis upon English ground all my difficulties have arisen; 'tis the passage from the river side I complain of.

Stock. Ay, indeed! What obstructions can you have met between this and the river side?

Bel. Innumerable! Your town is as full of defiles as the island of Corsica; and, I believe they are as obstinately defended; so much hurry, bustle, and confusion, on your quays: so many sugar casks, porter butts, and common-councilmen, in your streets, that

unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of Hercules can effect, to make any tolerable way through your town.

Stock. I am sorry you have been so incommoded.

Bel. Why, 'faith 'twas all my own fault ; accustomed to a land of slaves, and out of patience with the whole tribe of custom-house extortioners, boat-men, tide-waiters, and water-bailiffs, that beset me on all sides, worse than a swarm of musquitoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan ; the sturdy rogues took this in dudgeon, and beginning to rebel, the mob chose different sides, and a furious scuffle ensued ; in the course of which, my person and apparel suffered so much, that I was obliged to step into the first tavern to refit, before I could make my approaches in any decent trim.

Stock. All without is as I wish ; dear nature, add the rest, and I am happy. [*Aside.*] Well, Mr. Belcour, 'tis a rough sample you have had of my countrymen's spirit ; but, I trust, you'll not think the worse of them for it.

Bel. Not at all, not at all ; I like them the better ; was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable ; but, as a fellow-subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit, though I feel the effects of it in every bone of my skin.

Stock. That's well ; I like that well. How gladly I could fall upon his neck, and own myself his father !

[*Aside.*

Bel. Well, Mr. Stockwell, for the first time in my life, here am I in England ; at the fountain head of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it.

Stock. To use it, not to waste it, I should hope ; to treat it, Mr. Belcour, not as a vassal, over whom you have a wanton and a despotic power ; but as a subject,

which you are bound to govern, with a temperate and restrained authority.

Bel. True, sir, most truly said ; mine's a commission, not a right ; I am the offspring of distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother ; while I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind ; but, sir, my passions are my masters ; they take me where they will ; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs.

Stock. Come, come, the man who can accuse, corrects himself.

Bel. Ah ! that's an office I am weary of ; I wish a friend would take it up ; I would to heaven you had leisure for the employ ; but, did you drive a trade to the four corners of the world, you would not find the task so toilsome as to keep me free from faults.

Stock. Well, I am not discouraged ; this candour tells me I should not have the fault of self-conceit to combat, that, at least, is not amongst the number.

Bel. No ; if I knew that man on earth who thought more humbly of me than I do of myself, I would take up his opinion, and forego my own.

Stock. And was I to choose a pupil, it should be one of your complexion ; so if you'll come along with me, we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly.

Bel. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—A Room in Lady Rusport's House.

Enter LADY RUSPORT and MISS RUSPORT.

Lady R. Miss Rusport, I desire to hear no more of Captain Dudley and his destitute family ; not a shilling of mine shall ever cross the hands of any of them ;

because my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?

Miss R. I think you are.

Lady R. You think I am! and pray where do you find the law that tells you so?

Miss R. I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be a mean clause in the great statute of christianity.

Lady R. I say charity, indeed! I am apt to think the distresses of old Dudley, and of his daughter into the bargain, would never break your heart, if there was not a certain young fellow of two-and-twenty in the case; who, by the happy recommendation of a good person, and the brilliant appointments of an ensigncy, will, if I am not mistaken, cozen you out of a fortune of twice twenty thousand pounds, as soon as ever you are of age to bestow it upon him.

Miss R. A nephew of your ladyship's can never want any other recommendation with me: and, if my partiality for Charles Dudley is acquitted by the rest of the world, I hope Lady Rusport will not condemn me for it.

Lady R. I condemn you! I thank heaven, Miss Rusport, I am no ways responsible for your conduct; nor is it any concern of mine how you dispose of yourself: you are not my daughter; and when I married your father, poor Sir Stephen Rusport, I found you a forward spoiled miss of fourteen, far above being instructed by me.

Miss R. Perhaps your ladyship calls this instruction.

Lady R. You are strangely pert; but 'tis no wonder: your mother, I'm told, was a fine lady: and according to the modern style of education you was brought up. It was not so in my young days; there was then some decorum in the world, some subordination, as the great Locke expresses it. Oh! 'twas an edifying sight, to see the regular deportment observed in our family; no

giggling, no gossiping was going on there ; my good father, Sir Oliver Roundhead, never was seen to laugh himself, nor ever allowed it in his children.

Miss R. Ay ; those were happy times, indeed.

Lady R. But, in this forward age, we have coquettes in the egg-shell, and philosophers in the cradle ; girls of fifteen, that lead the fashion in new caps and new opinions, that have their sentiments and their sensations ; and the idle fops encourage them in it : O my conscience, I wonder what it is the men can see in such babies.

Miss R. True, madam ; but all men do not overlook the maturer beauties of your ladyship's age ; witness your admired Major Dennis O'Flaherty ; there's an example of some discernment ; I declare to you, when your ladyship is by, the Major takes no more notice of me than if I was part of the furniture of your chamber.

Lady R. The Major, child, has travelled through various kingdoms and climates, and has more enlarged notions of female merit than falls to the lot of an English homebred lover ; in most other countries, no woman on your side forty would ever be named in a polite circle.

Miss R. Right, madam ; I've been told that in Vienna they have coquettes upon crutches, and Venuses in their grand climacteric ; a lover there celebrates the wrinkles, not the dimples in his mistress's face. The Major, I think, has served in the imperial army.

Lady R. Are you piqued, my young madam ? Had my sister, Louisa, yielded to the addresses of one of Major O'Flaherty's person and appearance, she would have had some excuse ; but to run away, as she did, at the age of sixteen too, with a man of old Dudley's sort——

Miss R. Was, in my opinion, the most venial trespass that ever girl of sixteen committed ; of a noble family, an engaging person, strict honour, and sound

understanding, what accomplishment was there wanting in Captain Dudley, but that which the prodigality of his ancestors had deprived him of?

Lady R. They left him as much as he deserves; hasn't the old man captain's half-pay? and is not the son an ensign?

Miss R. An ensign! Alas, poor Charles! Would to heaven he knew what my heart feels and suffers for his sake.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Ensign Dudley, to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady R. Who! Dudley! What can have brought him to town?

Miss R. Dear Madam, 'tis Charles Dudley, 'tis your nephew.

Lady R. Nephew! I renounce him as my nephew; Sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson; Didn't the poor dear good old man leave his fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise than according to the will of the donor.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence came you? What brings you to town?

Charles. If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it, for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

Lady R. Coxcomb! And where is your father, child; and your sister? Are they in town too?

Charles. They are.

Lady R. Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

Miss R. Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

Lady R. Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment; when I want your advice, I'll send to you. [*Exit Miss Rusport.*] So you have put on a red coat too, as well as your father; 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice Sir Oliver used to give you; how often has he cautioned you against the army?

Charles. Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obeyed his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wondered at, if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

Lady R. Well, well, take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

Charles. I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

Lady R. I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing; my spirits cannot support it.

Charles. I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

Lady R. The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present; had Sir Oliver been pleased to consider them, I should have been well content; but he has absolutely taken no notice of you in his will, and that to me must and shall be a law. Tell your father and your sister, I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

Charles. Must I tell my father that, before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither? Allured by the offer of exchanging for a commission on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, pre-

pires to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Major O'Flaherty, to wait on your ladyship.

Enter MAJOR.

O'Fla. Spare your speeches, young man; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I have the honour of telling you so myself.

Lady R. Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

Charles. I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer?

Lady R. Your answer, child! What answer can you possibly expect? or how can your romantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings? Come, Major, let me show you the way into my dressing-room? and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. I follow you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient! Upon my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I would wish to clap my eyes on: he might have answered my salute, however—well, let it pass; Fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad; she's a damn'd slippery lady, and very apt to jilt us poor fellows that wear cockades in our hats. Fare thee well, honey, whoever thou art. [*Exit.*

Charles. So much for the virtues of a puritan—out upon it; her heart is flint.

Enter MISS RUSPORT.

Miss R. Stop, stay a little, Charles; whither are you going in such haste?

Charles. Madam! Miss Rusport! what are your commands?

Miss R. Why so reserved? We had used to answer to no other names than those of Charles and Charlotte.

Charles. What ails you? You have been weeping.

Miss R. No, no; or if I have, your eyes are full too; but I have a thousand things to say to you: before you go, tell me, I conjure you, where you are to be found; here, give me your direction; write it upon the back of this visiting ticket—Have you a pencil?

Charles. I have: but why should you desire to find us out? 'tis a poor little inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam, my lady desires your company directly.

Miss R. I am coming—well, have you wrote it? Give it me. O Charles! either you do not, or you will not, understand me. *[Exeunt severally.]*

ACT II.

Scene I.—A Room in Fulmer's House.

FULMER and MRS. FULMER.

Mrs. Ful. Why, how you sit, musing and moping, sighing and desponding! I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retired way of life at Bologne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease. Fool that I was, to be inveigled into it by you: but, thank heaven, our partnership is revocable; I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gulled but ourselves? which of all your trains has taken fire?

even this poor expedient of your bookseller's shop seems abandoned; for if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants?

Ful. Patty, you know it is not upon slight grounds that I despair; there had used to be a livelihood to be picked up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve at last: there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I have not set mine to; but in vain, I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

Mrs. Ful. Ah! common efforts all: strike me a master-stroke, Mr. Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

Ful. But where, how, and what? I have blustered for prerogative; I have bellowed for freedom; I have offered to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it; a master-stroke, truly! why, I have talked treason, writ treason, and, if a man can't live by that, he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why, men leave off reading; and if I was to turn butcher, I believe, o'my conscience, they'd leave off eating.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY *crosses the stage.*

Mrs. Ful. Why, there now's your lodger, old Captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you had the wit to find the way.

Ful. Hang him, an old dry-skinned curmudgeon; you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

Mrs. Ful. The more fool he! Would any man be poor, that had such a prodigy in his possession?

Fal. His daughter, you mean ; she is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

Mrs. Fal. Beautiful ! Why, she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. Egad, I wish I had the leasing of her beauty ; what would some of our young nabobs give—— ?

Fal. Hush ! here comes the Captain ; good girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

Mrs. Fal. Captain, truly ! I wish I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older. [Exit.

Enter Captain DUDLEY.

Fal. Captain Dudley, good morning to you.

Dud. Mr. Palmer, I have borrowed a book from your shop ; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram : he is a glittering writer to us poor soldiers : and the divine story of Le Fevre, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour, not to its author only, but to human nature.

Fal. He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never revisited : he's much in vogue and prodigious for his time.

Dud. That's being in vogue : I told him to be a universal in the highest sense : he talks, indeed, with the fluency, and sometimes, perhaps, the economy : but while he thus resolutely makes his own mark, he looks at once upon the reader, values himself on it, suffers it, and even calls it his own ; and then, when he has done it, and made every thing as plain and as convenient.

Fal. Well, sir, I shall not oppose your opinion : a devoted reader of the divine Tristram ; and there, you know, I should be well pleased to have his name assigned.

Dud. I shall be glad, sir, to hear from you again, and I shall be glad to hear from you again, and I shall be glad to hear from you again.

Ful. Sir!—Are you serious?

Dud. 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

Ful. What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside.*]—I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

Dud. I have been.

Ful. And this young lady, which accompanies you—

Dud. Passes for my daughter.

Ful. Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside.*]—She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

Dud. You are much too partial; she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

Ful. How so, pray?

Dud. She has no fortune.

Ful. Rather say, that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley: you have served, no doubt?

Dud. Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him?

[*Aside.*

Ful. A close old fox! but I'll unkennel him. [*Aside.*

Dud. Above thirty years I've been in the service, Mr. Fulmer.

Ful. I guessed as much; I laid it at no less: why, 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behindhand in the chase, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me; but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

Dud. It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better counsel. I am now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; though, without boasting, I should think the certificate of services,

which I sent in, might have purchased that indulgence to me.

Ful. Who thinks or cares about them? Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

Dud. What! Who! My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

Ful. Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

Dud. I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world! Despicable knowledge! But, sirrah, I will have you know— [Threatening him.]

Ful. Help! Who's within? Would you strike me, sir? would you lift up your hand against a man in his own house?

Dud. In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

Ful. Have a care what you do; remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

Dud. Go, sir; you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you. Hence!

Ful. An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be revenged of him. [Aside.]

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Charles. What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I entered the house.

Dud. Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

Charles. I did.

Dud. And what was your reception?

Charles. Cold as our poverty and her pride could make it.

Dud. You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

Charles. Alas, sir! she has peremptorily refused it.

Dud. That's hard; that's hard, indeed! My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say: well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker, about the insurance on my life?

Charles. There again I am the messenger of ill news; I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas! that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

Enter LOUISA DUDLEY.

Dud. Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened.

Lou. I am, indeed: coming from Miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

Charles. Insufferable! Was he rude to you?

Lou. I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat; he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

Dud. You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me, or your brother.

Lou. O Charles! Miss Rusport desires to see you directly; Lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

Charles. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Dud. None, my dear; by all means wait upon Miss Rusport. Come, Louisa; I must desire you to go up to your chamber, and compose yourself. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter BELCOUR, after peeping in at the door.

Bel. Not a soul, as I'm alive. Why, what an odd sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt, she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like

the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs, (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems,) I declare, I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have stayed in the torrid zone: I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane: what shall I do? give the chase up? hang it, that's cowardly: shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphné to escape me?—"Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, love." Hush! hush! here she comes! Oh! the devil! What tawdry thing have we got here?

Enter MRS. FULMER.

Mrs. Ful. Your humble servant, sir.

Bel. Your humble servant, madam.

Mrs. Ful. A fine summer's day, sir.

Bel. Yes, ma'am; and so cool, that, if the Calendar didn't call it July, I should swear it was January.

Mrs. Ful. Sir!

Bel. Madam!

Mrs. Ful. Do you wish to speak to Mr. Fulmer, sir?

Bel. Mr. Fulmer, madam? I hav'n't the honour of knowing such a person.

Mrs. Ful. No! 'Tis the Captain, I suppose, you are waiting for.

Bel. I rather suspect it is the Captain's wife.

Mrs. Ful. The Captain has no wife, sir.

Bel. No wife! I'm heartily sorry for it; for then she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two. Pray, madam, wasn't there a lady just now turned into your house? 'Twas with her I wished to speak.

Mrs. Ful. What sort of a lady, pray?

Bel. One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld ; young, tall, fresh, fair ; in short, a goddess.

Mrs. Ful. Nay, but dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter ; for 'twas me you followed into the shop-door this minute.

Bel. You ! no, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

Mrs. Ful. But what is it you laugh at ?

Bel. Upon my soul, I ask your pardon ; but it was not you, believe me ; be assured it wasn't.

Mrs. Ful. Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you ; I hope you think you wou'dn't have been the first man that noticed me in the streets ; however, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has entered these doors this morning.

Bel. Why, then, I'm mistaken in the house, that's all ; for it is not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. [Going.]

Mrs. Ful. Coxcomb ! But hold—a thought occurs ; as sure as can be, he has seen Miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman ; come back.

Bel. Well, what's your pleasure ?

Mrs. Ful. You seem greatly captivated with this young lady ; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight ?

Bel. Oh, yes ; 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love ; any man may tumble into a pit by surprise, none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

Mrs. Ful. You are a hasty lover, it seems ; have you spirit to be a generous one ? They, that will please the eye, mustn't spare the purse.

Bel. Try me ; put me to the proof ; bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

Mrs. Ful. But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on ?

Bel. By an undescrivable grace, that accompanies

every look and action that falls from her ; there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

Mrs. Ful. Well, if I should stumble upon this angel in my walks, where am I to find you ? What's your name ?

Bel. Upon my soul I can't tell you my name.

Mrs. Ful. Not tell me ! Why so ?

Bel. Because I don't know what it is myself ; as yet I have no name.

Mrs. Ful. No name !

Bel. None ; a friend, indeed, lent me his ; but he forbade me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

Mrs. Ful. But where is your place of abode ?

Bel. I have none ; I never slept a night in England in my life.

Mrs. Ful. Hey day !

Enter FULMER.

Ful. A fine case, truly, in a free country ; a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house.

Mrs. Ful. Who has assaulted you, my dear ?

Ful. Who ! why this Captain Drawcansir, this old Dudley, my lodger ; but I'll unlodge him ; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

Mrs. Ful. Hush ! hush ! Hold your tongue, man ; pocket the affront, and be quiet ; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why you surprise me, Mr. Fulmer ; Captain Dudley assault you ! Impossible.

Ful. Nay, I can't call it an absolute assault ; but he threatened me.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, was that all ? I thought how it would turn out—A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging, compassionate turn : no, no, poor Captain Dudley, he has sorrows and distresses enough of his

own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can : watch this gentleman out ; follow him wherever he goes, and bring me word who and what he is ; be sure you don't lose sight of him ; I've other business in hand. [*Exit.*

Bel. Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

Ful. Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon : sorrow enough of all conscience : I soon found how it was with him, by his way of living, low enough of all reason ; but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

Bel. What did you overhear this morning?

Ful. Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay ; but the climate, I find, where he is going, is so unhealthy, that nobody can be found to lend him any.

Bel. Why, then, your town is a damned good-for-nothing town : and I wish I had never come into it.

Ful. That's what I say, sir ; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old Lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's ; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant ; he sent to her a-begging, but to no purpose ; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

Bel. Is the Captain at home?

Ful. He is up stairs, sir.

Bel. Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither? I want to speak to him.

Ful. I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man ; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why. [*Exit.*

Bel. I've lost the girl, it seems, that's clear : she was the first object of my pursuit ; but the case of this poor officer touches me ; and, after all, there may be

as much true delight in rescuing a fellow-creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it—— But let me see: it's a point that must be managed with some delicacy—Apropos! there's pen and ink—I've struck upon a method that will do. [*Writes.*] Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have these bills about me. There, there, fare you well! I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[*Encloses and seals the paper.*]

FULMER *brings in* DUDLEY.

Ful. That's the gentleman, sir. I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear.

Dud. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Bel. Your name is Dudley, sir?——

Dud. It is.

Bel. You command a company, I think, Captain Dudley?

Dud. I did: I am now upon half-pay.

Bel. You have served some time?

Dud. A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit, and better interest than myself, made general officers.

Bel. Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to; there is little promotion to be looked for, in your profession, I believe, without friends, Captain?

Dud. I believe so too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

Bel. Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad.

Dud. I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full pay, quartered at James's Fort, in Senegambia; but, I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

Bel. Why so, pray?

Dud. Why so, sir? 'Tis a home question, for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

Bel. If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success?

Dud. Why, really, sir, mine is an obvious reason, for a soldier to have—want of money; simply that.

Bel. May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

Dud. Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed: but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

Bel. And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

Dud. The nature of the climate makes it difficult: I can get no one to insure my life.

Bel. Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, Captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two hundred pounds: seek no further; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

Dud. Sir! do I understand you rightly?—I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

Bel. What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another?

Dud. I ask your pardon—May I beg to know to whom?—Do you propose this in the way of business?

Bel. Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

Dud. Indeed! you are not a broker, I'm persuaded.

Bel. I am not.

Dud. Nor an army agent, I think?

Bel. I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act; while you read it, I will step home, and

fetch the money : and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the meanwhile, good day to you. [*Exit hastily.*]

Dud. Humph ! there's something very odd in all this—let me see what we've got here—This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms : in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it ? Hey day ! what's here ? Two Bank notes, of a hundred each ! I can't comprehend what this means. Hold ; here's a writing ; perhaps that will show me. “ Accept this trifle ; pursue your fortune, and prosper.” Am I in a dream ? Is this a reality ?

Enter MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. 'Save you, my dear ! Is it you now that are Captain Dudley, I would ask ?——Whuh ! What's the hurry the man's in ? If 'tis the lad that run out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are ; by my soul he's as nimble as a Croat, you are a full hour's march in his rear—Ay faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit ; well, Captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man ; read it ; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

Dud. More miracles on foot ! So, so, from Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. You're right ; it's from her ladyship.

Dud. Well, sir, I have cast my eye over it ; 'tis short and peremptory ; are you acquainted with the contents ?

O'Fla. Not at all, my dear ; not at all.

Dud. Have you any message from Lady Rusport ?

O'Fla. Not a syllable, honey : only, when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

Dud. And may I beg to know who yourself is ?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service ; a poor Major of Grenadiers ; nothing better.

Dud. So much for your name and title, sir; now be so good as to favour me with your message.

O'Fla. Why then, Captain, I must tell you I have promised Lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there.

Dud. Ay, indeed; have you undertaken so much, Major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

O'Fla. That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

Dud. Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords.

O'Fla. Upon my soul you've hit it.

Dud. That would hardly answer to either of us; you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

O'Fla. Faith and troth, Master Dudley, you may say that; 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries.—Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this ribband in my button-hole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my bellyfull of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off with this gash on my skull, and a kiss of the Empress Queen's sweet hand, (heaven bless it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps!—by the Lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about.

Dud. Well, Major, I won't add another action to the list; you shall keep your promise with Lady Rusport; she requires me to leave London; I shall go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

O'Fla. Give me your hand, my dear boy! this will make her my own; when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

Dud. Not so, Major; the man, who marries Lady Rusport, will have a fair title to her fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons.

O'Fla. Upon the best grounds in the world; first, I think she will comply, because she is a woman; secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow: and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I have married five wives, (*en militaire*, Captain) and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they are all alive and merry at this very hour.

Dud. Well, sir, go on, and prosper; if you can inspire Lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune; at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you. [*Exit.*]

O'Fla. A good sensible man, and very much of a soldier; I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that; the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley; I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing, and that is, like myself, having nothing to give. [*Exit.*]

Scene II.—Lady Rusport's House.

A Dressing Room.

MISS RUSPORT and LUCY.

Miss R. Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last; but methought you was a tedious time about it.

Lucy. A tedious time, indeed; I thought I should never have got her out of the house.

Miss R. But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in; I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

Lucy. Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [Exit.

Miss R. Now the deuce take the girl, for putting that notion into my head: I am sadly afraid Dudley does not like me; so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject! This may be very honourable, but upon my life it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look to-day: Oh! shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch!—This is the old lady's glass, and she has left some of her wrinkles on it.—How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dressed so unbecoming! altogether, I'm a most complete fright——

Enter CHARLES, unobserved.

Charles. That I deny.

Miss R. Ah!

Charles. Quarrelling with your glass, cousin? Make it up, make it up, and be friends; it cannot compliment you more than by reflecting you as you are.

Miss R. Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best courtesy: your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value, not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness: I verily think, this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

Charles. And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense, for having done it now.

Miss R. Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the

trifling article of good sense?—But any thing serves to fill up a dull, yawning, hour, with an insipid cousin ; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

Charles O, fie upon you ! fie upon you !

Miss R. You blush, and the reason is apparent :—you are a novice at hypocrisy ; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice : love is ever before its time ; friendship is apt to lag a little after it.—Pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither ?

Charles. By your question, I see, you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

Miss R. But why impertinence ? Why the impertinence of being in love ?—You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

Charles. You are mistaken—the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me, than what I use to you.

Miss R. I am afraid, then, you'll never make yourself understood by her.

Charles. It is not fit I should ; there is no need of love to make me miserable ; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

Miss R. A beggar do you call yourself ! O Charles, Charles, rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to ? And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it ?

Charles. You distress me ;—I must beg to hear no more.

Miss R. Well, I can be silent.—Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him.

[*Aside.*]

Charles. Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes for ever from your thoughts?

Miss R. Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours?—But, go, sir; I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished, fair one.

Charles. Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong; there is no such fair one for me to go to, nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

Miss R. Indeed!

Charles. In very truth—there, then, let us drop the subject.—May you be happy, though I never can!

Miss R. O Charles! give me your hand: if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

Charles. Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation!—[*Kissing her hand.*] Bear with thy infirmities! By heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

Miss R. And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing.—A thought strikes me;—I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me;—I have immediate occasion for the sum of two hundred pounds; you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box, (it contains my ear-rings, and some other baubles I have no use for) carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr. Stockwell, (I don't know where else to apply) leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with the sum.

Charles. Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

Miss R. How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds? Perhaps, I have lost it at play—perhaps, I mean to win as much

to it—perhaps, I want it for two hundred different uses.

Charles. Pooh! pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

Miss R. You mistake; I have a spirit to set, not only this trifle, but my whole fortune upon a stake; therefore make no wry faces, but do as I bid you. You will find Mr. Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

Enter LUCY, in haste.

Lucy. Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney coach.

Miss R. The old chariot has given her a second tumble:—away with you! you know your way out, without meeting her. Take the box, and do as I desire you.

Charles. I must not dispute your orders. Farewell!

[*Exeunt CHARLES and MISS RUSPORT.*]

Enter LADY RUSPORT, leaning on MAJOR O'FLAHERTY'S arm.

O'Fla. Rest yourself upon my arm; never spare it; 'tis strong enough; it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

Lucy. Mercy upon me, what is the matter? I am frightened out of my wits—Has your ladyship had an accident?

Lady R. O Lucy, the most untoward one in nature: I know not how I shall repair it.

O'Fla. Never go about to repair it, my lady; even build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

Lucy. Bless me, is the old chariot broke down with you again?

Lady R. Broke, child! I don't know what might have been broke, if by great good fortune this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

Lucy. Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

Lady R. Do, Lucy. [*Exit Lucy.*] Alas, sir! ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces:—there hangs his beloved picture; that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

O'Fla. Let me see—i'faith a comely personage; by his fur cloak, I suppose, he was in the Russian service; and by the gold chain round his neck, I should guess, he had been honoured with the order of St. Catharine.

Lady R. No; no; he meddled with no St. Catharines—that's the habit he wore in his mayoralty; Sir Stephen was Lord Mayor of London—but he is gone, and has left me, a poor, weak, solitary, widow, behind him.

O'Fla. By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty, man, to repair his loss:—if such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any disparagement to the gentleman in the fur gown there——

Lady R. What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparisons, I desire.

O'Fla. Not I, by my soul; I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

Enter Lucy.

Lady R. Oh, are you come? Give me the drops—I'm all in a flutter.

O'Fla. Harkye, sweetheart, what are those same drops? Have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

Lucy. Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops: they are only for ladies' cases.

O'Fla. Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as well as ladies, that stand in need of those same golden drops; they'd suit my case to a tittle.

Lady R. Well, Major, did you give old Dudley my letter, and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be-gone?

O'Fla. You are obeyed—he's on his march.

Lady R. That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection; I didn't think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

O'Fla. At the first word: no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came; I never met a more obliging gentleman.

Lady R. Well, 'tis no matter; so I am but rid of him, and his distresses: would you believe it, Major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a-beg-ging to me for money to fit him out upon some wild-goose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where.

O'Fla. Well, you sent him what he wanted?

Lady R. I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

O'Fla. You refused him?

Lady R. Most undoubtedly.

O'Fla. You sent him nothing?

Lady R. Not a shilling.

O'Fla. Good morning to you—Your servant—

[*Going.*

Lady R. Hey day! what ails the man? Where are you going?

O'Fla. Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum, that thirty years hard service has left me; I wish it was more, for his sake.

Lady R. Very well, sir; take your course; I sha'n't attempt to stop you; I shall survive it; it will not break my heart, if I never see you more.

O'Fla. Break your heart! No, o'my conscience will it not.—You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you are as hard-hearted as a hyena—A hyena, truly! by my soul, there isn't in the

whole creation, so savage an animal as a human creature without pity!

[Exit.

Lady R. A hyena, truly!

ACT III.

Scene I.—A Room in Stockwell's House.

STOCKWELL and BELCOUR.

Stock. Gratify me so far, however, Mr. Belcour, as to see Miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands: you know what to say on the occasion better than I do; that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

Bel. You could not have pitched upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummaged every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain:—part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances, that, nevertheless, determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

Stock. I persuade myself you will find Miss Rusport an ingenious, worthy, animated girl.

Bel. Why, I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a staid, sober, considerate, damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—Have a

...the last has been ...
...of a subject ...
...a student cannot ...
...I think, in ...
...you had ...
...well, if you'll ...
...to carry ...
...I'll have nothing to do with ...
...your first ...
...the first ...
...indeed, from what I know ...
...probably be ...
...use ...
...upon ...
...to ...
...this ...
...can I have picked up ...

DEAR SIR,

I have discovered the lady you was so much smitten with, and can procure you an interview with her; if you can be as generous to a pretty girl, as you was to a paltry old captain,—How did she find that out? —you need not despair; come to me immediately; the lady is now in my house, and expects you.

Yours,

MARTHA FULMER.

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper! which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon: I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slandered thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make, is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Mr. Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter encloses bills for the money; and, if you will deliver it to Miss Rusport, you'll have no further trouble on that score.

Bel. Ah! sir, the letter which I have been reading, disqualifies me for delivering the letter which you have been writing; I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

Stock. Hey day! What has turned you thus on a sudden?

Bel. A woman; one that can turn, and overturn, me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

Stock. Mere rhapsody: mere childish rhapsody: the libertine's familiar plea——Nature made us, 'tis true,

but we are the responsible creatures of our own faults and follies.

Bel. Sir !

Stock. Slave of every face you meet, some hussy has inveigled you ; some handsome profligate (the town is full of them) ; and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious, necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

Bel. You are severe.

Stock. It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father—I would say, a friend—How strangely I forgot myself!—How difficult it is to counterfeit indifference, and put a mask upon the heart!—I've struck him hard, he reddens.

Bel. How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me—But even your mistake I reverence—Give me your hand—'tis over.

Stock. Generous young man!—Let me embrace you—How shall I hide my tears? I have been to blame ; because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon—pursue your course ; I have no right to stop it—What would you have me do with these things?

Bel. This, if I might advise ; carry the money to Miss Rusport immediately ; never let generosity wait for its materials ; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels : I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands : and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [Exit.

Stock. Be it so ; good morning to you. Farewell, advice ! Away goes he, upon the wing for pleasure. What various passions he awakens in me ! He pains, yet pleases me ; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespass-

ing, for ever atoning, I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: just such a thoughtless, headlong thing was I, when I beguiled his mother into love.

[*Exit.*

Scene II.—Fulmer's House.

Enter FULMER and MRS. FULMER.

Ful. I tell you, Patty, you are a fool, to think of bringing him and Miss Dudley together: 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

Mrs. Ful. Why, sure, Mr. Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say. Who first sprung the thought, but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter, but I, I?

Ful. And who dogged the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connection: that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash; a gull to our heart's content; a hot-brained, headlong spark, that would run into our trap like a wheatear under a turf?

Mrs. Ful. Hark! he's come; disappear, march; and leave the field open to my machination. [*Exit FULMER.*

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, you men are sly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

Bel. All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion: thou! why, thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl, and odour of

roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho; but, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady! I expected to find her with you.

Mrs. Ful. No doubt you did, and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone—you are too late; girls, of her sort, are not to be kept waiting, like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

Bel. Gone! whither is she gone? tell me, that I may follow her.

Mrs. Ful. Hold, hold, not so fast, young gentleman, this is a case of some delicacy; should Captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

Bel. What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

Mrs. Ful. The same; him you was so generous to.

Bel. There's an end of the matter then at once; it shall never be said of me, that I took advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter. [Going.]

Mrs. Ful. So, so, I've made a wrong cast; but I won't lose him thus——Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. What is it you laugh at?

Mrs. Ful. Your absolute inexperience; have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know that, between young people of equal ages, the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

Bel. Indeed! are you serious?

Mrs. Ful. Can you doubt it? I must have been pretty well assured of that, before I invited you hither.

Bel. That's true; she cannot be a woman of honour, and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue, to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another; he shall therefore give her up: she is a

dear, bewitching, mischievous little devil, and he shall positively give her up.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, now the freak has taken you again ; I say give her up ! Outbid him ; never dream of out-blustering him. All things, then, will be made easy enough. Let me see, some little genteel present, to begin with ; what have you got about you ? Ay, search ; I can bestow it to advantage, there's no time to be lost.

Bel. Hang it, confound it ; a plague upon't, say I ! I hav'n't a guinea left in my pocket ; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

Mrs. Ful. Mighty well ; let it pass, then : there's an end ; think no more of the lady, that's all.

Bel. Distraction ! think no more of her ? let me step home, and provide myself ; I'll be back with you in an instant.

Mrs. Ful. Pooh, pooh ! that's a wretched shift ; have you nothing of value about you ? there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours ; rings, trinkets, jewels !

Bel. Jewels ! Gadso, I protest, I had forgot : I have a case of jewels : but they wont do, I must not part from them ; no, no, they are appropriated ; they are none of my own.

Mrs. Ful. Let me see, let me see ! Ay, now, this were something like : pretty creatures, how they sparkle ! these would ensure success.

Bel. Indeed !

Mrs. Ful. These would make her your own for ever.

Bel. Then the deuce take them, for belonging to another person ; I could find in my heart to give them the girl, and swear I've lost them.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, do, say they were stolen out of your pocket.

Bel. No, hang it, that's dishonourable ; here, give me

the paltry things, I'll write you an order on my merchant, for double their value.

Mrs. Ful. An order! No order for me! no order upon merchants, with their value received, and three days' grace; their noting, protesting, and indorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them; leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner; the money would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

Bel. Hey! how! I never thought of that; but a breach of trust; 'tis impossible: I never can consent, therefore give me the jewels back again.

Mrs. Ful. Take them; I am now to tell you, the lady is in this house.

Bel. In this house?

Mrs. Ful. Yes, sir, in this very house; but what of that? you have got what you like better: your toys, your trinkets; go, go; Oh! you are a man of notable spirit, are you not?

Bel. Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear girl, and dispose of me as you think fit.

Mrs. Ful. And of the diamonds too?

Bel. Damn them, I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But, come, come, despatch; if I had the throne of Delhi, I should give it to her.

Mrs. Ful. Swear to me then, that you will keep within bounds; remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant.

Bel. Never fear me.

Mrs. Ful. You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

Bel. Ay, ay, never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

Mrs. Ful. You'll be prepared upon that head?

Bel. I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you.

Mrs. Ful. But, hold, I had forgot : not a word of the diamonds ; leave that matter to my management.

Bel. Hell and vexation ! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit MRS. FULMER.*] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman ! sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property, honour forbids me ; and I positively cannot give up the girl ; love, passion, constitution, every thing protests against that. How shall I decide ? I cannot bring myself to break a trust, and I am not at present in the humour to balk my inclinations. Is there no middle way ? Let me consider——There is, there is : my good genius has presented me with one : apt, obvious, honourable, the girl shall not go without her baubles : I'll not go without the girl, Miss Rusport shan't lose her diamonds ; I'll save Dudley from destruction, and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

Enter MRS. FULMER, introducing MISS DUDLEY.

Mrs. Ful. Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see ; this is Mr. Belcour.

Lou. As I live, the very man that beset me in the streets ! [*Aside.*

Bel. An angel, by this light ! Oh, I am gone, past all retrieving ! [*Aside.*

Lou. Mrs. Fulmer, sir, informs me, you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

Bel. Oh, never name them.

Lou. Pardon me, Mr. Belcour, they must be both named and remembered ; and if my father was here——

Bel. I am much better pleased with his representative.

Lou. That title is my brother's, sir ; I have no claim to it.

Bel. I believe it.

Lou. But as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity——

Bel. Nor I neither, by my soul, madam: let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction; I was charmed at the first glance; I attempted to accost you; you fled; I followed; but was defeated of an interview; at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and my fortune at your feet.

Lou. You astonish me! Are you in your senses, or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do you ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

Bel. Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you on that score to this good lady, who I believe has something to offer in my behalf.

Lou. Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dross, before I can credit the sincerity of professions so abruptly delivered. [*Exit hastily.*

Ecl. Oh! ye gods and goddesses, how her anger animates her beauty! [*Going out.*

Mrs. Ful. Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever; why, you'll ruin every thing.

Bel. Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value though; a little superfluous dross, truly! She must have better proofs of my generosity.

Mrs. Ful. 'Tis exactly as I told you: your money she calls dross; she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin; bait your hook well with jewels; try that experiment, and she's your own.

Bel. Take them ; let them go ; lay them at her feet ; I must get out of the scrape as I can : my propensity is irresistible : there ; you have them ; they are yours ; they are hers ; but, remember, they are a trust ; I commit them to her keeping, till I can buy them off, with something she shall think more valuable ; now tell me when shall I meet her ?

Mrs. Ful. How can I tell that ? Don't you see what an alarm you have put her into ? Oh ! you're a rare one ! But go your ways for this while ; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening ; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you——
Ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Exeunt severally.*

Scene III.—Lady Rusport's House.

Enter Miss RUSPORT, followed by a SERVANT.

Miss R. Desire Mr. Stockwell to walk in.

[*Exit SERVANT.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Madam, your most obedient servant : I am honoured with your commands, by Captain Dudley ; and have brought the money with me, as you directed ; I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

Miss R. It is, sir ; I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. There is a Bank note, madam, to the amount : your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with. I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr. Belcour, a young gentleman in whose happi-

ness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

Miss R. Most gladly; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

Stock. I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion; an education not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt sometimes to betray him into youthful irregularities; but a high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour, will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

Miss R. I dare say Mr. Belcour's behaviour wants no apology: we have no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

Stock. I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr. Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, Miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

Miss R. Nor need you, Mr. Stockwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affections on another, I trust, I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr. Belcour; and hope, that neither you nor he will, for that reason, think me less worthy your good opinion and regards.

Stock. Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BELCOUR, preceded by a SERVANT.

Serv. I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

Bel. Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account; for

I'd sooner see the devil than see her face: [*Exit SERVANT.*] In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassador, without credentials! Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds; officious, meddling puppy! Now they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade, Fulmer, wouldn't part even with a sight of them, though I would have ransomed them at twice their value. Now must I trust to my poor wits, to bring me off: a lamentable dependence. Fortune be my helper: here comes the girl—If she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me; if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

Enter Miss RUSPORT.

Miss R. Mr. Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr. Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

Bel. A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang-dog do I look like! [*Aside.*

Miss R. You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

Bel. Just landed, madam; just set ashore, with a large cargo of Muscavado sugars, rum puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green paroquets.

Miss R. May I ask you how you like London, sir?

Bel. To admiration: I think the town and the town's folk are exactly suited; 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

Miss R. Are these all the observations you have made?

Bel. No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

Miss R. Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

Bel. From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from what I now feel.

Miss R. Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject; I believe, sir, this was a visit of business, not compliment; was it not?

Bel. Ay; now comes on my execution. *[Aside.*

Miss R. You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr. Belcour; hav'n't you?

Bel. No, in truth; they are gone in search of a trinket still more foolish than themselves. *[Aside.*

Miss R. Some diamonds I mean, sir; Mr. Stockwell informed me you was charged with them.

Bel. Oh, yes, madam; but I have the most treacherous memory in life—Here they are! Pray put them up; they're all right; you need not examine them.

[Gives a box.

Miss R. Heyday! right, sir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

Bel. Upon my life I'm glad on't; for then I hope you value them more than your own.

Miss R. As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner; you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

Bel. 'Tis yours, I am afraid, that belong to somebody else.

Miss R. What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking them back again.

Bel. Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them; I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

Miss R. That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine; but, pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels? and where have you disposed of mine?

Bel. Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I cou'dn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters: the truth is, I have given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs, I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away. Let me not totally despair of your forgiveness: I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity; if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

Miss R. Mr. Belcour, your sincerity charms me; I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another: remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, sir.

Enter SERVANT, and delivers a letter.

Does your letter require such haste?

Serv. I was bade to give it into your own hands, madam.

Miss R. From Charles Dudley, I see—have I your permission? Good heaven, what do I read! Mr. Belcour, you are concerned in this—— [Reads.

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

In the midst of our distress, Providence has cast a benefactor in our way, after the most unexpected manner: a young West Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart peculiar to his climate, has rescued my father from his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled him to ac-

compleish his exchange : when I relate to you the manner in which this was done, you will be charmed : I can only now add, that it was by chance we found out that his name is Belcour, and that he is a friend of Mr. Stockwell's. I lose not a moment's time in making you acquainted with this fortunate event, for reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress ; but, perhaps, if you have not received the money on your jewels, you will not think it necessary now to do it. I have the honour to be,

Dear madam,

most faithfully yours,

CHARLES DUDLEY.

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

Bel. Or so greatly overpaid.

Miss R. After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you. Know, then, sir, (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of my declaration,) that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

Bel. Say you so, madam! then let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all womankind; and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you are of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive. I'll equip you for your escape—I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you then to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

Miss R. But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, wouldn't it be a mortifying thing for a fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home, like a vagrant?—and such, for what I know, might be my case.

Bel. Then he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever——Ay, ay, 'tis the sham sister that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office to take that girl out of the way. [*Aside.*]

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Miss Dudley, to wait on you, madam.

Bel. Who?

Serv. Miss Dudley.

Miss R. What's the matter, Mr. Belcour? Are you frightened at the name of a pretty girl?—'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of——Pray admit her.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Bel. The sister!—So, so; he has imposed on her too——this is an extraordinary visit, truly. Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for.

Miss R. I insist upon your not running away;—you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

Bel. Oh yes, I am charmed with her.

Miss R. You have seen her then, have you?

Bel. Yes, yes, I've seen her.

Miss R. Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

Bel. Very delightful.

Miss R. Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice. O' my conscience, I believe you are caught; I've a notion, she has tricked you out of your heart.

Bel. I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave them to.

Miss R. You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels! admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade!—but, hush! here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

Enter LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you; how do you do?—

I beg leave to introduce Mr. Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine. I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

Lou. I have met the gentleman.

Miss R. You have met the gentleman!—well, sir, and you have met the lady; in short, you have met each other, why, then, don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied, and fixed as statues—ha! ha! ha! Why, you'll fall asleep by and by.

Lou. Fie upon you, fie upon you; is this fair?

Bel. Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life—the assurance of that girl puts me quite down.

[*Aside.*

Miss R. Sir—Mr. Belcour—Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable. Come, Louisa, woman's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you neither?—Speechless both—Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

Lou. I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, sir.

Bel. Madam!

Miss R. Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I won't tease you—apropos! I must show you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me. Are not these handsome diamonds?

Lou. Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

Miss R. Oh, you wicked little hypocrite! you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds, not you.

Lou. You know I hav'n't, Miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

Miss R. Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough.

[*Aside.*

Lou. What ails you, Charlotte?—What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary

to humble me at such a rate?—If you are happy, long may you be so: but surely it can be no addition to it, to make me miserable.

Miss R. So serious! there must be some mystery in this—Mr. Belcour, will you leave us together? You see, I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

Bel. Oh, by all means; pray command me. Miss Rusport, I am your most obedient! By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am under eternal obligations to you.—To you, Miss Dudley, I shall not offer a word on that subject;—you despise finery; you have a soul above it: I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here, but I shall hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you. [*Erit.*

Miss R. Louisa Dudley, you surprise me; I never saw you act thus before: can't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart?

Lou. The man of my heart, madam? Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom Miss Rusport honours with her choice.

Miss R. My choice, my dear! Why, we are playing at cross purposes: how entered it into your head that Mr. Belcour was the man of my choice?

Lou. Why, didn't he present you with those diamonds?

Miss R. Well, perhaps he did—and pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds?

Lou. I diamonds, truly! Who should give me diamonds?

Miss R. Who, but this very gentleman: apropos! here comes your brother——

Enter CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him: your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel; Belcour, the hero of

"I'm all astonishment! Loving, the
 country has Mr. Belcour given you any
 idea, upon my honour? Has he made any professions to you?
 He has; but altogether in a style so
 insincere, that the best which can be said
 of him, that they seemed more the result
 of good manners. Now the murder's out; he's
 out, and she has so very great dislike to his
 observations, Charles, for that: we can
 see there's some mistake about them, and go
 through three minutes conversation with
 every thing in a right train; go, go, Charles,
 make business; about it instantly; ten minutes
 over the way, at Mr. Stockwell's.
 "Now, Charles, I'm impatient to have
 you go. I'll take your advice, and find
 out all I can about it. I'll be home
 at four o'clock: my life upon it, you
 shall hear of it soon. Come, I wish
 to see you, I'm waiting here; I've written
 a line with you, before the girl has
 been sent for. I'll be home at four o'clock.
 I'll be home at four o'clock."

ACT IV.

Scene I.—A Room in Fulmer's House.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY and LOUISA.

Charles. Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept Miss Rusport's bounty; and, when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care, there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse; to be overthankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress would be, never to see her more.

Lou. I understand you.

Charles. We that are poor, Louisa, should be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least, till I can unravel the mystery of Miss Rusport's diamonds: I was disappointed of finding him at Mr. Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am staggered; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life, and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence. *[Exit.*

Lou. Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but if a wandering, uninvited thought, should creep by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter?

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. Alone, by all that's happy!

Lou. Ah!

Bel. Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, loveliest creature! but let me kneel, and gaze upon your beauties.

Lou. Sir! Mr. Belcour, rise! What is it you do?

Bel. See, I obey you; mould me as you will, behold your ready servant! New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits, and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy.

Lou. I must not hear this, Mr. Belcour; go; should he, that parted from me but this minute, now return, I tremble for the consequence.

Bel. Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

Lou. You terrify me; your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

Bel. True; I do know your situation, your real one, Miss Dudley, and am resolved to snatch you from it; 'twill be a meritorious act: the old Captain shall rejoice, Miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall in the end applaud and thank me. Come, thou art a dear enchanting girl, and I'm determined not to live a minute longer without thee.

Lou. Hold! are you mad! I see you are a bold assuming man, and know not where to stop.

Bel. Who that beholds such beauty can? by heaven, you put my blood into a flame. Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask, that I am not ready to grant?

Lou. Yes, with the same facility that you bestowed upon me Miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

Bel. So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where—Oh! I could tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter.

Lou. Go to her then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

Bel. Her reputation! Now she has got upon that,

she'll go on for ever.—What is there I will not do for your sake? I will go to Miss Rusport.

Lou. Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which, I suppose, you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but, for the future, Mr. Belcour, when you would do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expense.

Bel. I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up Miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so; 'tis what I wished.—Well, madam, I will return to Miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of ten-fold their value.

Lou. No, sir, you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

Bel. Why, what the devil would she have now?—Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you; but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

Lou. I think we do: tell me, then, in few words, what it is you aim at?

Bel. In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that had you but been such as it would have become me to have called my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune, give me in return your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumbered, antimatrimonial love.

Lou. Stand off, and let me never see you more.

Bel. Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting, tantalizing girl! upon my knees, I swear you shall not stir till you have consented to my bliss.

Lou. Unhand me, sir: O Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me. [Exit.]

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Charles. Draw, villain, and defend yourself.

Bel. Villain!

Charles. The man who wrongs that lady is a villain—
Draw!

Bel. Never fear me, young gentleman; brand me for a coward, if I balk you.

Charles. Yet hold! let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour.

Bel. Well, sir.

Charles. How is it, Mr. Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector, of that injured lady.

Bel. The brother! give yourself a truer title.

Charles. What is't you mean?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour and of villain never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on!
[*They fight.*]

Enter LOUISA, and afterwards O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold, for heaven's sake hold!

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Can't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, hav'n't you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think, o'my conscience, she's the most frightened of the three.

Charles. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'tis in your cause.

Bel. Now could I kill him for caressing her.

O'Fla. O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed, like a Calmuck, now you are tilting and driving like a bedlamite, with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, when you have recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found. [Exit.

O'Fla. Well, then, can't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? Yon volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a round-about method that of his. But I think he called you Dudley; harkye, young man, are you son of my friend the old Captain?

Charles. I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

O'Fla. Ay will I: come along, pretty one; if you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never while you live draw your sword before a woman. [Exit.

Scene II.—Lady Rusport's House.

Enter LADY RUSPORT and SERVANT.

Serv. An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

Lady R. Show him in; the very man I wish to see. Varland, he was Sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs: he brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

Enter VARLAND.

Mr. Varland, I'm glad to see you; you are heartily welcome, honest Mr. Varland; you and I hav'n't met since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

Var. Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good Sir Oliver.

Lady R. Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr. Varland, you find me here overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me, unsought-for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

Var. Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after Captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

Lady R. I do so, Mr. Varland; I do so.

Var. I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

Lady R. Why, you know, Mr. Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and Sir Stephen Rusport (heaven be his portion!) took care I shou'dn't want that.

Var. Very true, very true; he did so; and I am overjoyed to find your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

Lady R. News, sir! what news have you for me?

Var. Nay, nothing to alarm you; a trifle, in your present way of thinking: I have a will of Sir Oliver's you have never seen.

Lady R. A will! impossible! how came you by it, pray?

Var. I drew it up, at his command, in his last ill-

ness: it will save you a world of trouble: it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

Lady R. To Dudley? his estate to Charles Dudley? I can't support it! I shall faint! You have killed me, you vile man! I never shall survive it!

Var. Lookye there now! I protest, I thought you would have rejoiced at being clear of the incumbrance.

Lady R. 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why else did I never hear of it before?

Var. Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you:—By Sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatched thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days; upon my recovery I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

Lady R. Dudley then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

Var. Nothing; that secret rests with me.

Lady R. A thought occurs: by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale. [*Aside.*—Come, Mr. Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself; I ask your pardon: this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly—Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Miss RUSPORT, CHARLES, and O'FLAHERTY.

Miss R. So, so! My lady and her lawyer have re-

tired to close confabulation : now, Major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

O'Fla. 'Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither ; for, though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

Charles. Could this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be ! *[Aside.*

Miss R. Plant yourself, then, in that room : keep guard for a few moments upon the enemy's motions, in the chamber beyond ; and, if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back-stairs.

O'Fla. A word to the wise ! I'm an old campaigner ; make the best use of your time ; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

Miss R. Hush ! hush ! not so loud.

Charles. 'Tis the office of a centinel, Major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field officer.

O'Fla. 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy ; and, therefore, no disgrace to a general. *[Exit.*

Miss R. Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes ?

Charles. Most readily ; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

Miss R. Hold, hold ! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say ? O, Charles ! O, Dudley ! what difficulties have you thrown upon me ! Familiarly as we have lived, I shrink now at what I am doing ; and, anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

Charles. You alarm me !

Miss R. Your looks and actions have been so distant, and at this moment are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust, inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and appre-

hension; but time presses; and I must speak; and plainly too—Was you now in possession of your grandfather's estate, as justly you ought to be; and, was you inclined to seek a companion for life, should you, or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

Charles. My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me heaven; there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open, an unreserved, ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear, unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

Miss R. Nay, now you rate too highly the poor advantages fortune alone has given me over you: how otherwise could we bring our merits to any balance? Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more, by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the meanwhile you will be sent to join your regiment; let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country, where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

Charles. Belcour's?—The name is ominous; there's murder in it: bloody, inexorable honour! [*Aside.*

Miss R. D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

Charles. Honourable! most honourable!

Miss R. Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unasked assistance——

Enter O'FLAHERTY, hastily.

O'Fla. Run, run; for holy St. Anthony's sake, to horse, and away! The conference is broke up, and the

old lady advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

Miss R. Here, here, down the back stairs! O Charles, remember me!

Charles. Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward.
[Exit.]

Miss R. What does he mean?

O'Fla. Ask no questions, but begone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damned deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: egad I'll step behind this screen, and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush, as well as open field.
[Retires.]

Enter VARLAND.

Var. Let me consider—Five thousand pounds, prompt payment, for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes; and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away; 'tis a good round sum, to be paid down at once for a bribe; but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

O'Fla. So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people—but, hush! [Aside.]

Var. 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor, that's a foul crime; but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony; that's a hard case; but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

O'Fla. These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own. [Aside.]

Var. Were I assured now that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that Lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price; I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart, and say the same thing.

O'Fla. A bargain, old gentleman ! Nay, never start, nor stare, you wasn't afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

Var. Of you, sir ! who are you, pray ?

O'Fla. I'll tell you who I am : you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it ; now I am the very man in the world to make you so ; for, if you do not give me up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that shan't be broken.

Var. What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me ?

O'Fla. What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley ? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours ; therefore give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating : do now ; you had best.

Var. Well, sir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There ; I have acquitted my conscience, at the expense of five thousand pounds.

O'Fla. Five thousand pounds ! Mercy upon me ! When there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it ?

Var. Well, you have got the paper ; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

O'Fla. An honest man ! look at me, friend ; I am a soldier, this is not the livery of a knave ; I am an Irishman, honey ; mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, sirrah, be gone ; if you enter these doors, or give Lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

Var. I wish I was once fairly out of his sight.

[*Exeunt,*

Scene III.—A Room in Stockwell's House.

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. I must disclose myself to Belcour ; this noble instance of his generosity, which old Dudley has been relating, allies me to him at once ; concealment becomes too painful ; I shall be proud to own him for my son —But, see, he's here.

Enter BELCOUR, and throws himself upon a sofa.

Bel. O my curs'd tropical constitution ! 'Would to heaven I had been dropped upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions !

Stock. So, so, you seem disordered, Mr. Belcour.

Bel. Disordered, sir ! Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew ; what evil planet drew me from that warm, sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country ?

Stock. Come, sir, you've met a rascal ; what o'that ? general conclusions are illiberal.

Bel. No, sir, I have met reflection by the way ; I have come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain ! 'twas not to be pardoned—pray never mind me, sir.

Stock. Alas ! my heart bleeds for him.

Bel. And yet, I might have heard him : now, plague upon that blundering Irishman, for coming in as he did ; the hurry of the deed might palliate the event : deliberate execution has less to plead—Mr. Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

Stock. Oh, sir, make no excuse ; if you think I can render you any service, it may be worth your trial to confide in me ; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

Bel. That sentiment demands my confidence : pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of

honour on my hands, with young Dudley ; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

Stock. I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father ; what can have bred a quarrel between you ?

Bel. A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr. Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty ; she has withal an air of so much natural modesty, that, had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

Enter SERVANT.

Stock. Heyday, do you interrupt us ?

Serv. Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial : he says, he must see Mr. Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

Bel. Admit him ; 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge ; I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

Enter O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. 'Save you, my dear ; and you, sir, I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

Bel. Pray deliver your commands : this gentleman is my intimate friend.

O'Fla. Why, then, Ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you, yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate Street, at nine o'clock—you know the place.

Bel. I do ; and shall observe the appointment.

O'Fla. Will you be of the party, sir ? we shall want a fourth hand.

Stock. Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal ; and, though I am not fully informed of the

occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr. Belcour's honour for the justice of it, and willingly stake my life in his defence.

O'Fla. Sir, you are a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—But, harkye, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand; there is the money you gave old Dudley: you may tell it over, 'faith: 'tis a receipt in full. Now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience; and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

Bel. The sister?

O'Fla. Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one; you understand me, his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will. By St. Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met with in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands.

[*Exit.*

Stock. Why, I am thunderstruck! what is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged? If I understand him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a professed wanton; the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion; if you have done that, Mr. Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

Bel. Have patience for a moment; we do indeed speak of the same person; but she is not innocent, she is not young Dudley's sister.

Stock. Astonishing! who told you this?

Bel. The woman where she lodges, the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

Stock. What woman? What person?

Bel. Fulmer her name is, I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

Stock. Fulmer, Fulmer? Who waits?

Enter a SERVANT.

Send Mr. Stukely hither directly; I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr. Belcour, Mr. Belcour, you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

Enter STUKELY.

Pr'ythee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stopped upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

Stuke. Fulmer.

Stock. So!

Bel. Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

Stuke. They are now in my hand; I was desired to show them to Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. Give them to me—what do I see?—as I live, the very diamonds Miss Rusport sent hither, and which I entrusted to you to return.

Bel. Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them Mrs. Fulmer, to present to Miss Dudley.

Stock. With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance?

Bel. I own it.

Stock. For shame, for shame!—and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for Miss Dudley's character?

Bel. I thought she knew her;—by heaven, I would have died, sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour.

Stock. I think you would; but mark the danger of licentious courses; you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world, with all your follies on

your head.—Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him I have an owner for the jewels; and beg him to carry the people under custody to the Loudon Tavern, and wait for me there.—[*Exit STUKELY.*] I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped: you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane admirer, and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her. Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

Bel. To the lady, the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but, in the execution of an act of justice, it never shall be said, my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear. I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour;—I have been branded with the name of villain.

Stock. Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours; error begets error.

Bel. Villain, Mr. Stockwell, is a harsh word.

Stock. It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

Bel. Come, come, it shall be unsaid.

Stock. Or else, what follows? Why, the sword is drawn; and to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends, by murdering the brother.

Bel. Murdering!

Stock. 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour, there is no such term.—But, come, I don't despair of satisfying the one, without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitted to receive.

ACT V.

Scene I.—Stockwell's House.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY, LOUISA, and STUKELY.

Dud. And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

Stuke. They are in good hands; I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure, Mr. Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

Dud. What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

Lou. Still I am terrified; I tremble with apprehension, lest Mr. Belcour's impetuosity, and Charles's spirit, should not wait for an explanation, but drive them both to extremes, before the mistake can be unravelled.

Stuke. Mr. Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear;—you cannot suppose he would ask you hither, for any other purpose, but to celebrate their reconciliation, and to receive Mr. Belcour's atonement.

Dud. No, no, Louisa, Mr. Stockwell's honour and discretion guard you against all danger or offence. He well knows we will endure no imputation on the honour of our family; and he certainly has invited us to receive satisfaction on that score in an amicable way.

Lou. 'Would to heaven they were returned!

Stuke. You may expect them every minute;—and see, madam, agreeably to your wish, they are here.

[*Exit.*

Enter CHARLES; afterwards STOCKWELL and O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. O Charles, O brother! how could you serve me so? how could you tell me you was going to Lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting

Mr. Belcour? But where is he; where is your antagonist?

Stock. Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, Miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which, I take for granted, my friend Stukely has explained to you.

Dud. He has—I have too good an opinion of Mr. Belcour, to believe he could be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl; and I am much too well acquainted with your character, to suppose you could abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in a very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Belcour.

Stock. He has only stepped into the compting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr. Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple;—his manners, passions, and opinions, are not as yet assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world, and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

Enter BELCOUR—bows to Miss DUDLEY.

Bel. I am happy, and ashamed, to see you;—no man in his senses would offend you; I forfeited mine, and erred against the light of the sun, when I overlooked your virtues; but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight;—I now perceive, I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

Lou. Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

Bel. My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error:—I was once given to hope, Mr. Stockwell, that you was to have delivered me from these difficulties; but either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceived in ~~my~~ *my expectations.*

Stock. When this lady has confirmed your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

Lou. That was granted the moment it was asked.

Bel. To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes conversation in private with you. [*She turns to her father.*]

Dud. By all means, Louisa;—come, Mr. Stockwell, let us go into another room.

Charles. And now, Major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise, of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's. I think I have waited with great patience.

O'Fla. I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard; I have got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction. [*Exeunt.*]

Bel. Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion: How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

Lou. To me there's nothing due, nor any thing demanded of you but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me; upon the part of virtue, I am not empowered to speak; but if hereafter, as you range through life, you should surprise her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph; but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

Bel. I will, I will. As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

Lou. Are sudden reformations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not en-

snare affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

Bel. I know I am not worthy your regard; I know I am tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eyes, that makes recovery certain; I cannot be a villain in your arms.

Lou. That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't, that woman will be happy.

Bel. Oh, seal it with your hand, then, loveliest of women; confirm it with your heart: make me honourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

Lou. My love!—

Enter O'FLAHERTY; afterwards DUDLEY and CHARLES, with STOCKWELL.

O'Fla. Joy, joy, joy! sing, dance, leap, laugh for joy. Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees to every saint in the calendar, for they are all on your side, and honest St. Patrick at the head of them.

Charles. O Louisa, such an event! by the luckiest chance in life, we have discovered a will of my grandfather's, made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

Lou. What is it you tell me? O sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune. [*To her father.*

Dud. Name not fortune, 'tis the work of Providence; 'tis the justice of heaven, that would not suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A SERVANT whispers BELCOUR, and he goes out.*

O'Fla. You shall pardon me, Captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St. Patrick neither, for, by my

soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen, when your righteous aunt and the lawyer were plotting together, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that Master Stockwell is reading.

Dud. True, my good friend, you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

O'Fla. By force, my dear, the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

Stock. Well, Major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

Charles. That I am bound to do, and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

O'Fla. And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there, for 'tis now thirty long years since I sat foot in my native country, and by the power of St. Patrick I swear I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

Dud. Ay, Major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over; we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows; but Charles shall lay us up in a little private, but safe harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

O'Fla. Agreed, and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, that Major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands, for, by heaven, I'd sooner starve, than say I thank you, to the man I despise: but I believe you are an honest lad, and I'm glad you've trounc'd the old cat, for, on my conscience, I believe I must

otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

Stock. Hey day, what's become of Belcour?

Lou. One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

Stock. I hope, Miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought.

Lou. Mr. Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought, and in my case I fear only you will think he has done too much.

Stock. What has he done? and what can be too much? Pray heaven, it may be as I wish! [*Aside.*

Dud. Let us hear it, child.

Lou. With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess to you he has offered me——

Stock. Himself.

Lou. 'Tis true.

Stock. Then I am happy; all my doubts, my cares are over, and I may own him for my son.—Why, these are joyful tidings; come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal; he is no unprincipled, no hardened libertine: his love for you and virtue is the same.

Dud. 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

O'Fla. Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours, for you may see plainly enough by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, though she speaks never a word.

Charles. Well, sister, I believe the Major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

Lou. I own it; and what must that heart be, which love, honour, and beneficence, like Mr. Belcour's, can make no impression on?

Stock. I thank you; what happiness has this hour brought to pass!

O'Fla. Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

Stock. Hold, here comes Belcour.

Enter BELCOUR, introducing Miss RUSPORT.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection; she is equipped for Scotland, but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey—Nay, madam, never go back! you are amongst friends.

Charles. Charlotte!

Miss R. The same; that fond, officious girl, that haunts you every where: that persecuting spirit——

Charles. Say rather, that protecting angel; such you have been to me.

Miss R. O, Charles, you have an honest, but proud heart.

Charles. Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

Bel. Seal up her lips, then; she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

Charles. Thus, then, I claim my dear, my destined wife.
[*Embracing her.*]

Enter LADY RUSPORT.

Lady R. Hey day! mighty fine! wife, truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing—did ever any thing equal this? Why, you shameless hussy!—But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you.—You, sir, you, Mr. Stockwell; you fine, sanctified, fair dealing man of conscience, is this the principle you trade upon? is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for runaway daughters, and young beggarly fortune hunters?

O'Fla. Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion; we were all very happy till you came.

Lady R. Stand away, sir; hav'n't I a reason to be in a passion?

O'Fla. Indeed, honey, and you have, if you knew all.

Lady R. Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me. Young man, let me never see you within my doors again: Mr. Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend on it.

Stock. Hold, madam, I cannot consent to lose Miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it; 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner, believe me it is.

Lady R. Her happiness, truly! upon my word! and I suppose it's an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar? I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you. [To CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

Dud. Don't be too lavish of your spirits, Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. By my soul, you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial elixir by and by.

Stock. It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr. Dudley can be called a beggar.

Lady R. But it appears to me, Mr. Stockwell; I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heir of Sir Stephen Rusport.

Miss R. But a good estate, in aid of a commission, may do something.

Lady R. A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

Stock. Why, suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death-bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

Lady R. Hah! what's that you say?

O'Fla. O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

Stock. Suppose there should be a paper in the world, that runs thus—"I do hereby give and bequeath all my

estates, real and personal, to Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter Lonisa, &c. &c. &c."

Lady R. Why, I am thunderstruck! by what contrivance, what villany, did you get possession of that paper?

Stock. There was no villany, madam, in getting possession of it; the crime was in concealing it, none in bringing it to light.

Lady R. Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

O'Fla. You may say that, 'faith; he is a cursed lawyer; and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him: your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it; I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

Lady R. Is it you that have done this? am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

O'Fla. 'Twas a blunder, 'faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o'purpose.

Charles. Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

Lady R. Am I become an object of your pity, then? Insufferable! confusion light amongst you! marry, and be wretched: let me never see you more. [*Exit.*

Miss R. She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

Charles. Come, Charlotte, don't let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her, in spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

Miss R. I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

Bel. Now, lovely, but obdurate, does not this example soften?

Lou. What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

Bel. O, bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy—

O'Fla. Blessing of St. Patrick upon us all ! 'tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs : I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

Stock. Hold for a moment ! I have yet one word to interpose—Entitled by my friendship to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match ; there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

Bel. Have I a father ?

Stock. You have a father.—Compose yourself—you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

Bel. Keep me no longer in suspense ; my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. My father !—Do I live ?

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. It is too much——my happiness overpowers me—to gain a friend, and find a father, is too much ! I blush to think how little I deserve you. [*They embrace.*]

Dud. See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

O'Fla. O' my conscience, I think we shall be all related by and by.

Stock. How happily has this evening concluded, and yet, how threatening was its approach !—Let us repair to the supper room, where I will unfold to you every circumstance of my mysterious story.—Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but inquiring, eye, and I have discovered, through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence and animated nature ; fallible, indeed, but not incorrigible ; and your election of this excellent young lady, makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

Bel. I thank you, and in my turn, glory in the father I have gained. Sensibly impressed with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the providence of this night, and I will turn to reason, and obey. *as/c*

END OF VOL. I.

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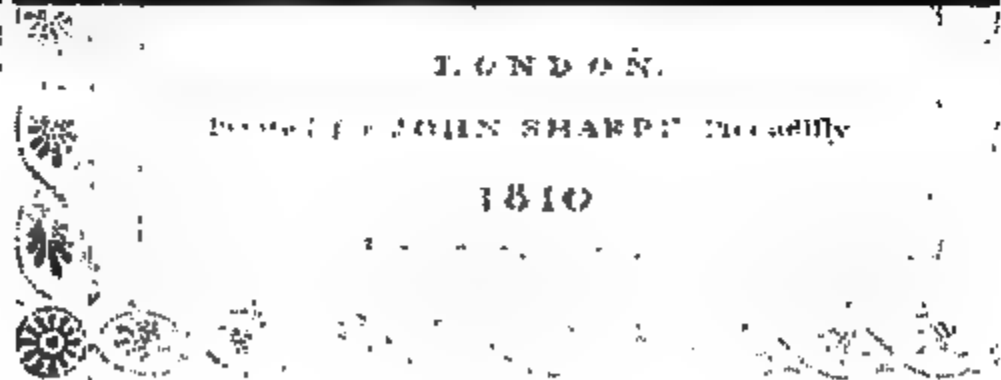
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CONTENTS.



	Page
THE RIVALS..... <i>Sheridan</i>	1
THE WAY TO KEEP HIM..... <i>Murphy</i>	85
THE FUGITIVE..... <i>Richardson</i> .	175



THE
RIVALS;

A COMEDY.

BY
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.
FAULKLAND.
ACRES.
FAG.
DAVID.
JAMES.
COACHMAN.
SERVANTS.

MRS. MALAPROP.
LYDIA LANGUISH.
JULIA.
LUCY.
JENNY.

SCENE—Bath.

THE RIVALS.

ACT I.

Scene I.—A Street at Bath.

COACHMAN *crosses the stage.*—Enter FAG, *looking after him.*

WHAT! Thomas! Sure 'tis he!—What! Thomas! Thomas!

Coachm. Hey! odd's life!—Mr. Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow servant!

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas; I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad! why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath?

Coachm. Sure, Master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coachm. Ay: master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit, so he'd a mind to g'it the slip,—and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay; hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute.

Coachm. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young Master? Odd, Sir Anthony will stare, to see the Captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

Coachm. Why, sure!

Fag. At present, I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Coachm. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you han't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coachm. No! why, didn't you say, you had left young Master?

Fag. No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no further;—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coachm. But, pray, why does your master pass only for ensign?—now, if he had shammed general, indeed——

Fag. Ah, Thomas! there lies the mystery o' the matter!—Harkye, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste—a lady, who likes him better as a half-pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year.

Coachm. That is an odd taste, indeed! but has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? is she rich, eh?

Fag. Rich! why, I believe, she owns half the stocks! —Z——s, Thomas, she could pay the national debt, as easily as I could my washerwoman!—She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold—she feeds her parrot with small pearls, and all her thread-papers are made of bank notes!

Coachm. Bravo, 'faith!—Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands, at least; but does she draw kindly with the Captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coachm. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish.—But there is an old tough annt in the way—though, by the by, she has never seen my master—for he got acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coachm. Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But, pray, Mr. Fag, what kind

of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a great deal of it;—here's a mort o' merry making, eh?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge—but d—n the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me—not a fiddle or a card after eleven! however, Mr. Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas, you'll like him much.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed you must:—Here, now, this wig! what, the devil, do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips, of any degree of ton, wear wigs now.

Coachm. More's the pity, more's the pity, I say—Odds life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next. ' Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr. Fag: and lookye, I'll never gi' up mine, the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coachm. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind,—for in our village now, thoff Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake his bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold, mark—mark, Thomas!

Coachm. Zooks, 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no; that is Madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid; they lodge at that house—but I must after him, to tell him the news.

Coachm. Odd, he's giving her money!—Well, Mr. Fag—

Fag. Good b'ye, Thomas ; I have an appointment in Gyde's porch this evening at eight ; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. *[Exeunt, severally.]*

Scene II.—A Dressing Room in MRS. MALAPROP'S Lodgings.

LYDIA LANGUISH *sitting on a sofa, with a book in her hand.*—LUCY, *as just returned from a message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it : I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I han't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get "The Reward of Constancy?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Fatal Connection?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Mistakes of the Heart?"

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Bull said, Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigho ! Did you inquire for "The Delicate Distress?"

Lucy. Or, "The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?" Yes, indeed, ma'am, I asked every where for it ; and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slat-tern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's eared it, it wan't fit for a Christian to read.

Lydia. Heigho ! Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me : she has a most observing thumb, and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me ?

Lucy. Oh, here ma'am ! *[Taking books from under her sloak, and from her pockets.]* This is "The Man of

Feeling," and this, "Peregrine Pickle"—Here are "The Tears of Sensibility," and "Humphrey Clinker."

Lydia. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—[*Exit Lucy.*]*—*Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Lud, ma'am! here is Miss Melville!

Lydia. Is it possible!

Enter JULIA.

Lydia. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Julia. True, Lydia, and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? you were denied to me at first.

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath?—Is Sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is; we are arrived within this hour, and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress: I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me. My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley; but I have lost him, Julia;—my aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since; yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night, since we have been here, at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia!

Lydia. No, upon my word—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses to be known to him;—but it is a Delia, or a Celia, I assure you.

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece?

Lydia. Quite the contrary; since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine.—Then I must inform you of another plague; that odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day, so that, I protest, I shall be teased out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best:—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst;—unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all; but I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel; and somehow I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity; so, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself, that Beverley was, at that time, paying his addresses to another woman.—I signed it, “Your friend unknown,” showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out; I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign—and you have thirty thousand pounds.

Lydia. But, you know, I lose most of my fortune, if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew

the penalty; nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even his faults.

Lydia. But a-propos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

Julia. Not yet; upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath—Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, though under the protection of Sir Anthony; yet, have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely—We were contracted before my father's death: that, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish—He is too generous to trifle on such a point—and, for his character, you wrong him there too.—No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble, to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover.—This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him; but tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast that upset your boat, was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strengthened my attach-

ment to Mr. Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me ; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation ! Why, a water spaniel would have done as much ! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim !

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest.—What's here ?

Enter Lucy in a hurry.

Lucy. O ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute, just come home with your aunt !

Lydia. They'll not come here—Lucy, do you watch.

[*Exit Lucy.*

Julia. Yet I must go ; Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words, so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. O lud, ma'am ! they are both coming up stairs.

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, Coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia ! I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

Julia. Adieu !

[*Exit JULIA.*

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books.—Quick, quick.—Fling “Peregrine Pickle” under the toilet—throw “Roderick Random” into the closet—put “The Innocent Adultery” into “The Whole Duty of Man”—thrust “Lord Aimworth” under the sofa—cram “Ovid” behind the bolster—there—put “The Man of Feeling” into your pocket—so, so ; now lay “Mrs. Chapone” in sight, and leave “Fordyce's Sermons” open on the table.

Mrs. M. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? they don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest, in matrimony, to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor, dear uncle, before marriage, as if he'd been a black-a-moor; and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. M. Take yourself to your room: you are fit company for nothing but your own ill humours.

Lydia. Willingly, ma'am; I cannot change for the worse. [Exit.]

Mrs. M. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am; all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs. M. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy!

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes with marble covers: From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs. M. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge!—It blossoms through the year; and, depend on it, Mrs. Mala-

prop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. M. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. M. Observe me, Sir Anthony—I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman—for instance—I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning: nor would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments; but, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but, above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise, that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying.—This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question.—But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say, you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs. M. None, I assure you.—I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres; and as Lydia is so

obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly.—He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. M. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop; Jack knows, that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas, “Jack, do this”—if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. M. Ay, and the properest way, o'my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl—take my advice, keep a tight hand—if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about. [Exit SIR ANTHONY.]

Mrs. M. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my tuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Sure, Lucy can't have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simpleton I should have made her confess it.—Lucy! Lucy! [*Calls.*] Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs. M. Yes, girl—Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. M. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned——

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out!

Mrs. M. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, ma'am.

Mrs. M. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius—but mind, Lucy, if ever you betray what you are entrusted with, (unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. *[Exit.*

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite, *[Altering her manner;]* let girls, in my station, be as fond as they please of being expert and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my simplicity lately: *[Looks at a paper.]* For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign! in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five; hats, ruffles, caps, &c. &c. numberless.—From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half.—About a quarter's pay!—Item, from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—two guineas and a black paduso;—Item, from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas and a pair of buckles.—Item, from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocketpieces, and a silver snuff-box!—Well done, simplicity! yet I was forced to

make my Hibernian believe that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for, though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy, to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [Exit.]

ACT II.

Scene I.—Captain Absolute's Lodgings.

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE and FAG.

Fag. Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in. I told him you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Capt. Abs. And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life, I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished!

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. Oh, I lied, sir—I forget the precise lie, but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me.—Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath, in order that we may lie a little consistently.—Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious indeed.

Capt. Abs. You have said nothing to them?—

Fag. Oh, not a word, sir—not a word.—Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)—

Capt. Abs. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have not trusted him!

Fag. Oh, no, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly!—My master (said I) honest

Thomas (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to recruit—yes, sir—I said to recruit—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Capt. Abs. Well—recruit will do—let it be so—

Fag. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Capt. Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon—But with submission, a lie is nothing, unless one supports it.—Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge endorsements as well as the bill.

Capt. Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security. Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Capt. Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol.—I think, sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down—

Capt. Abs. Go, tell him. I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir—[*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please.

Capt. Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I shall esteem it as an obligation;—for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [Exit.

Capt. Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—If he does

not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him——

Enter FAG.

Fag. Mr. Faulkland, sir.

[*Erit.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Capt. Abs. Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again : you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes ; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you ? How stand matters between you and Lydia ?

Capt. Abs. Faith, much as they were ; I have not seen her since our quarrel ; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once ?

Capt. Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune ? You forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt, in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony, for his consent.

Capt. Abs. Softly, softly, for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side ; well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel ?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot ; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Capt. Abs. By heavens ! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover !—Do, love like a man.

Faulk. Ah ! Jack, your heart and soul are not like mine, fixed immutably on one only object.—You throw

for a large stake, but, losing—you could stake, and throw again :—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stripped of all.

Capt. Abs. But, for heaven's sake ! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present ?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say ? Heavens ! are there not a thousand ! I fear for her spirits—her health—her life—O ! Jack, when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension !

Capt. Abs. Ay, but we may choose whether we will take the hint or not.—So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well, and in spirits, you would be entirely content ?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Capt. Abs. Then cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Capt. Abs. She is arrived here, with my father, within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious ?

Capt. Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better, than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind.—Seriously then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr. Acres, just arrived, is below.

Capt. Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your

mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up. [Exit FAG.]

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Capt. Abs. Oh, very intimate: he is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend, Captain Absolute, ever saw the lady in question;—and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who—

Faulk. Hush!—He's here!

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble Captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, 'faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way, as long as the Mall.

Capt. Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither—give me leave to introduce Mr. Faulkland to you; Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you: sir, I solicit your connections.—Hey, Jack—what, this is Mr. Faulkland, who—

Capt. Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr. Faulkland.

Acres. Ah! Mr. Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man!

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir,—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir,—never better.—Odd's blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed!—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir—only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Capt. Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick.

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me:—yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess— isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

Capt. Abs. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what then she has been merry and gay I suppose?—always in spirits, hey?

Acres. Merry, odds crickets! she has been the bell and spirit of the company, wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. By my soul! there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome.—What! happy, and I away!

Capt. Abs. Just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Capt. Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Capt. Abs. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Capt. Abs. No, 'faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid, indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Capt. Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy—that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has, indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month—odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs. Piano's concert!

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to sooth her light heart with catches and glees!—What can you say to this, sir?

Capt. Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not?

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Capt. Abs. He says the lady we speak of, dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay truly, does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! oh! she thrives in my absence!—dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—oh! d—ned, d—ned levity!

Capt. Abs. For heaven's sake! Faulkland, don't expose yourself so.—Suppose she has danced, what then? does not the ceremony of society often oblige—

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say—for form sake.—What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

Acres. Oh, I dare insure her for that—but what I

was going to speak of, was her country dancing:—odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!—

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute, why don't you defend this?—country dances! jigs, and reels! am I to blame 'now? a minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say, I should not have regarded a minuet—but country dances! Z——ds! had she made one in a cotillion—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey led for a night!—to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies!—to show paces, like a managed filly!—Oh, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country dance; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Capt. Abs. Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, it will spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig—their quivering, warm breathed sighs impregnate the air—the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. [Going.

Capt. Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news.

Faulk. D—n his news! [Exit.

Capt. Abs. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland! five minutes since—"nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!"

Acres. The gentleman wasn't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Capt. Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me!—that's a good joke!

Capt. Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob ; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah ! you joke—ha ! ha ! mischief—ha ! ha ! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me.—She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours ! I shan't take matters so here—now ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straightway cashier the hunting frock—and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Capt. Abs. Indeed !

Acres. Ay—and thoff the side curls are a little restive, my hind part takes it very kindly.

Capt. Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints ! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Capt. Abs. Spoke like a man—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

Acres. Ha ! ha ! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it?—I didn't invent it myself, though ; but a commander in our militia—a great scholar, I assure you—says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable ;—because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove ! or by Bacchus ! or by Mars ! or by Venus ! or by Pallas ! according to the sentiment—so that to swear with propriety, says my little Major, the “ oath should be an echo to the sense ;” and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing—ha ! ha ! ha ! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

Capt. Abs. Very genteel, and very new indeed—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—
D—ns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below, desires to see you—Shall I show him into the parlour?

Capt. Abs. Ay—you may.

Acres. Well, I must begone—

Capt. Abs. Stay; who is it, *Fag*?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Capt. Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly? *[Exit FAG.]*

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop, at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Adieu, Jack, we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Capt. Abs. That I will, with all my heart. *[Exit ACRES.]* Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so well!—your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Capt. Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack; I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Capt. Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty, and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time.—Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance, for a lad of your spirit.

Capt. Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world.—I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Capt. Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh! that shall be as your wife chooses.

Capt. Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Capt. Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Capt. Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference?

Capt. Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Capt. Abs. I was, sir,—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odd's life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it as it stands.

Capt. Abs. Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Capt. Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you, to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Capt. Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Harkye, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool,—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrensy.

Capt. Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't by——

Capt. Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to——

Sir Anth. Z—ds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum—she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night, to write sonnets on her beauty.

Capt. Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir, I know you are laughing in

your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Capt. Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word.

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do!—passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition? Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, z——ds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Scene II.—The North Parade.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his dear Delia, as he calls her:—I wonder he's not here!—

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Hah! my little embassadress—upon my conscience I have been looking for you; I have been on the South Parade this half hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

Sir L. 'Faith!—may be that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade coffee-house, and I chose the window on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir L. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir L. O 'faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed—well—let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a letter.*

Sir L. [*Reads.*] *Sir—there is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Very pretty, upon my word! Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet, let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.*

DELIA.

Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! 'Faith! she's quite the queen of the dictionary!

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience——

Sir L. Experience! what, at seventeen?

Lucy. O, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir L. 'Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom. However, when affection guides the pen, he must be a brute who finds fault with the style.

Lucy. Ah! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir L. Oh, tell her, I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain!—But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'nt rich enough to be so nice!

Sir L. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor that I can't afford to do a dirty action.—If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress, and her fortune, with a great deal of pleasure.—However, my pretty girl, [*Gives her money.*] here's a little something, to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I will give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand to put you in mind.

[*Kisses her.*]

Lucy. O lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gentleman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir L. 'Faith she will, Lucy—that same—pho! what's the name of it!—modesty!—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty—my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir L. Ah then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now ; here is some one coming.

Sir L. O 'faith I'll quiet your conscience !

[*Sees FAG.—Exit, humming a tune.*]

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, ma'am. I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O lud !—now, Mr. Fag—you flurry one so !

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please—You play false with us, madam—I saw you give the baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out—I will.

Lucy. Ha ! ha ! ha ! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty !—That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How ! what tastes some people have ! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window a hundred times. But what says our young lady ?—Any message to my master ?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr. Fag ! A worse rival than Acres ! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute ?

Lucy. Even so. I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha ! ha ! ha ! very good, 'faith ! Good b'ye, Lucy, I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well, you may laugh, but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr. Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate !

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear—never fear.

Lucy. Be sure bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will. [*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT III.

*Scene I.—The North Parade.**Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*

Capt. Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed!—Whimsical enough, 'faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connection with her yet awhile. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters, however I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but I can assure him, it is very sincere——So, so, here he comes—he looks plaguy gruff! *[Steps aside.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting his impudence had almost put me out of temper—An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him—he's any body's son for me—I never will see him more——never——never——never——never.

Capt. Abs. Now for a penitential face!

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Capt. Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Capt. Abs. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Capt. Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Capt. Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing, what you were pleased to mention, concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Capt. Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflections is, a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why, now you talk sense, absolute sense; I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again.

Capt. Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Capt. Abs. Languish? What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! no. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop, and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Capt. Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay, I think I do recollect something—Languish—Languish——She squints, don't she?—A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints!—A red-haired girl! Z—ds! no!

Capt. Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Capt. Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent; if I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion! and, if not smiling, more sweetly pouting—more lovely in sullenness! Then, Jack, her neck! O Jack! Jack!

Capt. Abs. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece, or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old, or ugly, to gain an empire.

Capt. Abs. Not to please your father, sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father——Z——ds! not to please——O, my father——Oddso!—yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter——Though he wasn't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Capt. Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and, though one eye may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is ! Why, sirrah, you are an anchorite ! A vile, insensible stock ! You a soldier ! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on ! Odds life, I've a great mind to marry the girl myself !

Capt. Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir ; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt ; or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady,—'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie, I'm sure it must—come, now, d—n your demure face ! come, confess, Jack, you have been lying—han't you ? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey ?—I'll never forgive you, if you han't been lying, and playing the hypocrite.

Capt. Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty, which I bear to you, should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty ! But, come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, 'egad, I'll marry the girl myself !

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—Julia's Dressing Room.

FAULKLAND.

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly ; I wonder she is not yet come !—How mean does this captious, unsatisfied, temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment ! What tender, honest joy, sparkled in her eyes when we met ! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions !—I was ashamed to appear less

happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming—Yes, I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

Julia. O Faulkland! when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health: sure I had no cause for coldness?

Julia. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill: you must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then, shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire? on your mirth—your singing—dancing—and I know not what! For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment, in your absence, as a treason to constancy. The mutual tear, that steals down the cheek of parting lovers, is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing, minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh, in your breast, against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No,

no, I am happy, if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with mirth—say, that you thought of Faulkland in the dance.

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence. If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph, and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me! Oh, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude!

Faulk. Ah, Julia! that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality: to regard me for any quality of mind, or understanding, were only to esteem me! And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where Nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now, this is not well from you, Julia; I despise person in a man, yet, if thou loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind——The contract, which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no, I am proud of my restraint: yet—yet, perhaps, your high respect alone for this solemn compact, has fettered your inclinations, which else had made a worthier choice.

Julia. Then try me now—Let us be free as strangers, as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty.

Faulk. There, now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not loose your hold, even though I wished it!

Julia. Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it!

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you: if I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment.—But hear me—All my fretful doubts arise from this—Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast, yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune, such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend; but, as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so—I have given you no cause for this. [Exit, in tears.

Faulk. In tears! stay, Julia—stay but for a moment——The door is fastened! Julia! my soul! but for one moment!—I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath! what a brute am I to use her thus!—Yet stay—Ay, she is coming now: how little resolution there is in woman! how a

few soft words can turn them!—No, 'faith, she's not coming, either! Why, Julia, my love! say but that you forgive me: come but to tell me that—now, this is being too resentful! stay, she is coming too; I thought she would—no steadiness in any thing! her going away must have been a mere trick then; she shan't see that I was hurt by it—I'll affect indifference: [*Hums a tune, then listens.*]—No, z——ds! she's not coming, nor don't intend it, I suppose! This is not steadiness, but obstinacy! Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence, to quarrel with her tenderness! 'twas barbarous and unmanly!—I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated, and, when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever!

[*Exit.*]

Scene III.—Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings.

MRS. MALAPROP, with a letter in her hand, and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Mrs. M. Your being Sir Anthony's son, Captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Capt. Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. M. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, Captain, you'll be seated. [*Sit.*] Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think, how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense now, but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Capt. Abs. It is but too true, indeed, ma'am ; yet, I fear, our ladies should share the blame ; they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge, in them, would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom : few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the orange tree, are rich in both at once !

Mrs. M. Sir, you overpower me with good breeding—He is the very pine-apple of politeness ! You are not ignorant, Captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Capt. Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before. I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account ; but it must be very distressing indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Oh, it gives me the hydrostatics, to such a degree ! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him ; but, behold, this very day I have interceded another letter from the fellow—I believe I have it in my pocket.

Capt. Abs. Oh, the devil ! my last note ! *[Aside.]*

Mrs. M. Ay, here it is.

Capt. Abs. Ay, my note, indeed ! Oh, the little traitress, Lucy ! *[Aside.]*

Mrs. M. There, perhaps you may know the writing. *[Gives him the letter.]*

Capt. Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before.

Mrs. M. Nay, but read it, Captain.

Capt. Abs. *[Reads.]* *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia !*—Very tender, indeed !

Mrs. M. Tender ! aye, and profane too, o'my conscience !

Capt. Abs. *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival—*

Mrs. M. That's you, sir.

Capt. Abs. Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour. — Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs. M. Oh; the fellow has some design in writing so.

Capt. Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs. M. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

Capt. Abs. As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon, who guards you—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs. M. Me, sir—me—he means me there—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

Capt. Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—*it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance; as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand—*

Mrs. M. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs.

Capt. Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—*same ridiculous vanity—*

Mrs. M. You need not read it again, sir!

Capt. Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am—*does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration—an impudent coxcomb!—so that I have a scheme to see you shortly, with the old Harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interviews.—* Was ever such assurance!

Mrs. M. Did you ever hear any thing like it!—He'll elude my vigilance, will he?—yes, yes!—ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors!—we'll try who can plot best.

Capt. Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will.—Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy! ha! ha! ha!—Well, but Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by

this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs. M. I am delighted with the scheme; never was any thing better perpetrated!

Capt. Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs. M. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind.—There is a decorum in these matters.

Capt. Abs. O Lord, she won't mind me!—only tell her, Beverley——

Mrs. M. Sir!

Capt. Abs. Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. What did you say of Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below—she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. M. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves—besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha!—Let him, if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here! [*Calling.*] He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia!—I don't wonder at your laughing—ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am!—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. M. The little hussy won't hear.—Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her.—And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Capt. Abs. As you please, ma'am.

Mrs. M. For the present, Captain, your servant—
Ah, you've not done laughing yet, I see—elude my
vigilance! yes, yes—Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Ha! ha! ha! one would think, now, that
I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my
prize with security—but such is Lydia's caprice, that,
to undeceive, were probably to lose her. I'll see whether
she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the
pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! surely
nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to
listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's
heart.—I have heard of girls persecuted, as I am, who
have appealed, in behalf of their favoured lover, to the
generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there
stands the hated rival—an officer too!—but, oh, how
unlike my Beverley!—I wonder he don't begin—truly,
he seems a very negligent wooer!—quite at his ease,
upon my word!—I'll speak first—Mr. Absolute!

Capt. Abs. Ma'am! [*Turns round.*

Lydia. O heavens! Beverley!

Capt. Abs. Hush!—hush, my life!—softly! be not
surprised!

Lydia. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so
overjoyed!—for heaven's sake, how came you here?

Capt. Abs. Briefly—I have deceived your aunt—I
was informed that my new rival was to visit here this
evening, and, contriving to have him kept away, have
passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. Oh, charming!—And she really takes you
for young Absolute?

Capt. Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lydia. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing, to
think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Capt. Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licensed warmth, plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

Capt. Abs. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!—Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, listening.

Mrs. M. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Capt. Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs. M. Warmth abated?—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lydia. No—nor ever can, while I have life.

Mrs. M. An ill-temper'd little devil!—She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. M. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this to his face!

Capt. Abs. Thus, then, let me enforce my suit.

[*Kneeling.*

Mrs. M. Ay—poor young man!—down on his knees, entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Capt. Abs. Oh, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Captain Absolute—I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Capt. Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mrs. M. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lydia. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. M. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face, that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam—I did not.

Mrs. M. Good heavens, what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley—that stroller, Beverley—possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lydia. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley——

Mrs. M. Hold!—hold, assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Capt. Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech:—she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. M. You are too good, Captain—too amiably patient;—but come with me, miss—let us see you again soon, Captain—remember what we have fixed.

Capt. Abs. I shall, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

Mrs. M. Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along—come along.

[*Exeunt severally*—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *kissing his hand to* LYDIA, MRS. MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

Scene IV.—Acres's Lodgings.

ACRES and DAVID discovered—ACRES as just dressed.

Acres. Indeed, David—dress does make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you; Master Butler would'nt believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, "Lard, presarve me!" our dairy maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house, but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr. De la Grace been here, I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the Post Office.

David. I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself!

[*Exit.*

[*ACRES comes forward, practising a dancing step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillions, say I!—they are as bad as algebra, to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.—Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over two couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the country!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillions are quite beyond me!—I shall

never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curs'd French lingo!—their *pàs* this, and *pàs* that, and *pàs* t'other!—d—me! my feet don't like to be called paws!

Enter DAVID.

David. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger, to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Show him in. *[Exit* DAVID.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir L. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. 'Faith, I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-Lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last!—In short, I have been very ill used, Sir Lucius. I don't choose to mention names, but look on me as a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir L. Pray, what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius; I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of. This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill used.

Sir L. Very ill, upon my conscience!—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why there's the matter: she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir L. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir L. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir L. We wear no swords here, but you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him!

Sir L. Ay, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir L. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! Ay, ay; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir L. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. 'Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir L. What the devil signifies right; when your honour is concerned? do you think, Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broad swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching!—I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say—odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir L. Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss Hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the New Room; every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank heaven our honour and the family pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. Oh, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too!—every man of them colonel or captain in the militia!—odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it.—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!—Z—ds! as the man in the play says, "I could do such deeds"—

Sir L. Come, come; there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me.—Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say, indite!—How shall I begin! Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir L. Pray, compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a d—me!

Sir L. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a christian. Begin now—*Sir*——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir L. To prevent the confusion that might arise—

Acres. Well——

Sir L. From our both addressing the same lady——

Acres. Ay—there's the reason—same lady—Well——

Sir L. I shall expect the honour of your company——

Acres. Z—ds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

Sir L. Pray be easy.

Acres. Well, then, honour of your company——

Sir L. To settle our pretensions——

Acres. Well——

Sir L. Let me see—ay, King's Mead-fields will do——*in King's Mead-fields.*

Acres. So, that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger, shall be the seal.

Sir L. You see, now, this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir L. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then, let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir L. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life, I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson!

Sir L. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well, for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but, at the same time, as polished, as your sword.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT IV.

Scene I.—Acres's Lodgings.

ACRES and DAVID.

David. Then by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't!

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very care-

ful of it, and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look ye, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend, ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman, (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that) Bob!—I kill him—(the more's my luck). Now, pray who gets the profit of it?—why, my honour.—But put the case that he kills me! by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David, in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Z—ds! David, you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look ye now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think it might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very great danger, hey? odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his d—ned double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me

tremble to think o't—those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! well, I never could abide them!—from a child I never could fancy them!—I suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Z—ds! I won't be afraid—odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.—Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend, Jack Absolute, to carry it for me.

David. Ay, i'the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter!—it is, as I may say, a designing and malicious looking letter!—and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon! you han't the valour of a grasshopper.

David. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall!—but I ha' done.—How Phillis will howl, when she hears of it!—ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after!—and I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born!

[*Whimpering.*]

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

David. Good b'ye, master.

[*Whimpering.*]

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven.

[*Exit DAVID.*]

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St. George, and the dragon to boot—

Capt. Abs. But what did you want, with me, Bob?

Acres. Oh!—there—

[*Gives him the challenge.*]

Capt. Abs. To Ensign Beverley. So—what's going on now! [*Aside.*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Capt. Abs. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him; will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Capt. Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Capt. Abs. Well, give it me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Capt. Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—you couldn't be my second, could you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. Why no, Bob—not in this affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then I must get my friend, Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Capt. Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below inquiring for the Captain.

Capt. Abs. I'll come instantly. Well, my little hero, success attend you. [Going.]

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

Acres. Ay, do, do—and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called, in the country, "Fighting Bob."

Acres. Right, right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

Capt. Abs. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him, do you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not. But a devil of a fellow, hey? [Going.

Acres. True, true—But stay—stay, Jack—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Capt. Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Capt. Abs. Ay, ay, "Fighting Bob."

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene II.—Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings.

MRS. MALAPROP and LYDIA.

Mrs. M. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him?—Isn't he a handsome man?—tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! [Aside.] So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs. M. No caparisons, miss, if you please.—Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman.

Lydia. Ay, the Captain Absolute you have seen.

[Aside.

Mrs. M. Then he's so well bred;—so full of alacrity and adulation!—I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—"Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye, like March, to threaten at command!—a station, like Harry Mercury,

new"—Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake ! *[Aside.*

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Show them up here. *[Exit SERVANT.]* Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.]

Enter SIR ANTHONY and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow—I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs. M. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects! *[Aside to her.]*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. *[Aside to him.]*

Capt. Abs. What the devil shall I do! *[Aside.]*—You see, sir, she won't even look at me whilst you are here.—I knew she wouldn't!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE seems to expostulate with his father.]

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I wonder I ha'nt heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him! perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs. M. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs. M. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.—Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—Z—ds! sirrah! why don't you speak? [*Aside to him.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Capt. Abs. Hem! hem! Madam—hem! [*ABSOLUTE attempts to speak, then returns to SIR ANTHONY*]—Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir,—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

[*ABSOLUTE makes signs to MRS. MALAPROP, to leave them together.*

Mrs. M. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—Ah! you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—

[*Aside to him.*

Capt. Abs. [*Draws near LYDIA.*] Now heav'n send

she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice. [*Aside.—Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*]—Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love?—Will not——

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow?—Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Capt. Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your modesty again!—I'll tell you what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front. [*Mrs. MALAPROP seems to chide LYDIA.*]

Capt. Abs. So!—all will out, I see!

[*Goes up to LYDIA, speaks softly.*]

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heav'ns! 'tis Beverley's voice!—Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!

[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*]
Is this possible!—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Ah! 'tis all over! [*Aside.*]

Sir Anth. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. M. For shame, hussy! for shame!—your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Z——ds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs. M. O' my conscience, I believe so!—what do you mean by Beverley, hussy?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband, that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. Oh! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs. M. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!—

Capt. Abs. Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So!—there will be no elopement after all!

[*Sullenly.*]

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Capt. Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir,—you compliment—'tis my modesty you know, sir—my modesty, that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am——So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience!—I thought it was d—n'd sudden—You never heard their names before, not you!—What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey?—if you could

please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!—Ah! you dissembling villain!—What! [*Pointing to LYDIA.*] she squints, don't she?—a little red-haired girl!—hey?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. M. O lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then?—What!—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of “an old weather-beaten she-dragon”—hey?—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Capt. Abs. Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart, to be so good-humoured! and so gallant!—hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. M. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will now be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack—isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue!—and the lip—hey? Come, Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!—“*Youth's the season made for joy*”—[*Sings.*]—hey!—Odds 'life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am [*Gives his hand to Mrs. MALAPROP;* [*Sings.*] Tol-de-rol—'gad I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol!

[*Exit singing, and handing Mrs. MALAPROP.*
LYDIA ~~sits~~ sullenly in the chair.

Capt. Abs. So much thought bodes me no good
[*Aside.*—So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Capt. Abs. So! egad! I thought as much!—that d—ned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows—

Lydia. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Pecvishly.*

Capt. Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Capt. Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the license, and——

Lydia. The license!—I hate license!

Capt. Abs. Oh, my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw!—what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?

Capt. Abs. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart,—I resign the rest.—'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly, imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating me like a child!—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Capt. Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear——

Lydia. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approba-

tion—and I am myself the only dupe at last! [*Walking about in a heat.*]—But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, sir, [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured, I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Capt. Abs. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that—here, [*Taking out a picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish—what a difference!—ay, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes!—those are the lips, which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar;—and there the half resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks.—Well, all that's past;—all over indeed!—There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind, its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it. [*Puts it up again.*]

Lydia. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Capt. Abs. Oh, most certainly—sure now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some spirit in this!—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises;—all that's of no consequence, you know.—To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that:—or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady, and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing this insolence!

[*Bursts into tears.*]

Enter Mrs. MALAPROP and Sir ANTHONY.

Mrs. M. [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing awhile.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit,
you base ingrate. [*Sobbing.*]

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now !—Z—ds !
Mrs. Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I
 ever heard !—but what the deuce is the meaning of it ?
 —I'm quite astonished !

Capt. Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs. M. Oh, mercy !—I'm quite analys'd, for my
 part !—why, *Lydia*, what is the reason of this ?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

Sir Anth. Z—ds ! I shall be in a phrensy !—why,
 Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you ?

Mrs. M. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there ?
 —you are not, like *Cerberus*, three gentlemen at once,
 are you ?

Capt. Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady
 can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to
 think of *Beverley* again—there is the man—I now obey
 you :—for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever.

[*Exit LYDIA.*

Mrs. M. O mercy and miracies ! what a turn here is
 —why sure, Captain, you haven't behaved disrespect-
 fully to my niece ?

Sir Anth. Ha ! ha ! ha !—ha ! ha ! ha !—now I see it
 —Ha ! ha ! ha !—now I see it—you have been too
 lively, Jack.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word—

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs. M. O lud ! *Sir Anthony* !—O he, Captain !

Capt. Abs. Upon my soul, ma'am—

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses Jack ;—why your father,
 you know, was so before you :—the blood of the *Ab-*
solutes was always impatient.—Ha ! ha ! ha ! poor little
Lydia !—may you've frightened her, you dog, you
 have !

Capt. Abs. By all that's good, sir—

Sir Anth. —is't say no more, I tell you—*Mrs.*
Malaprop shall make your peace.—You must make

his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her, 'tis Jack's way—tell her, 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come, away, Jack, ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushes him out.*]

Mrs. M. Oh, Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Scene III.—The North Parade.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself.—Upon my conscience!—these officers are always in one's way, in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a Major, who ran away with her before she could get sight of me!—And I wonder what it is the ladies can see in them, to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth.—Hah, isn't this the Captain coming?—'faith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*]

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. To what fine purpose have I been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gipsy!—I did not think her so d—n'd absurd either.—'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in all my life!—I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir L. O, 'faith! I'm in the luck of it.—I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteely.

[*SIR LUCIUS goes up to ABSOLUTE.*]*—*with regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Capt. Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant:*—*because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir L. That's no reason.*—*For, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth, as well as speak one.

Capt. Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir L. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Capt. Abs. Harkye, Sir Lucius, what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir L. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension; [*Bowing.*] you have named the very thing I would be at.

Capt. Abs. Very well, sir,*—*I shall certainly not balk your inclinations*—*but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir L. Pray, sir, be easy*—*the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel, as it stands*—*we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it.*—*However, your memory is very short*—*or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week.*—*So, no more, but name your time and place.

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better;*—*let it be this evening*—*here by the Spring Gardens.*—*We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir L. 'Faith! that same interruption, in affairs of this nature, shows very great ill breeding.*—*I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness.*—*However, if it's the same to you, Captain, I should take

it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead-fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis the same to me, exactly,—A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir L. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot.—So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease. [*Exit.*

Enter FAULKLAND, meeting CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. Well met.—I was going to look for you,—Oh, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource, in being knocked o'the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean?—Has Lydia changed her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Capt. Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints:—when her love-eye was fixed on me—t'other—her eye of duty, was finely obliqued:—but when duty bid her point that the same way—off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you—

Capt. Abs. Oh, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here, has [*Mimicking Sir Lucius.*] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat—and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. 'Prythee, be serious.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul.—Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock,—'tis on that account I wished to see you—you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure.—Sir Lucius shall explain himself—and I dare say matters may be accommodated:—but this evening, did you say?—I wish it had been any other time.

Capt. Abs. Why? there will be light enough:—there will (as Sir Lucius says) “be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot”—Confound his long shots!

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile, tormenting temper, has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Capt. Abs. By heavens, Faulkland, you don’t deserve her!

Enter SERVANT: gives FAULKLAND a letter.

Faulk. O Jack! this is from Julia; I dread to open it; I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters, and restore—Oh, how I suffer for my folly!

Capt. Abs. Here—let me see—[*Takes the letter, and opens it.*] Ay, a final sentence, indeed! ’tis all over with you, ’faith!

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don’t keep me in suspense.

Capt. Abs. Hear, then.

As I am convinced, that my dear Faulkland’s own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject.—I wish to speak with you as soon as possible.

Yours ever, and truly,

JULIA.

There’s stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the letter.*] Why, man, you don’t seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. Oh, yes, I am—but—but—

Capt. Abs. Confound your buts! You never hear any

thing, that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately d—n it with a but!

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own, honestly—don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us: they should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness, and their pardon, like their love, should "Not unsought, be won."

Capt. Abs. I have not patience to listen to you—thou'art incorrigible! so say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six, remember, at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil, like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted, to gain my ends, and am, at last, disappointed by other people's folly, may, in pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little! but a captious sceptic, in love; a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [Exit.

Faulk. I feel his reproaches: yet, I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel, has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue: I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness; if her love prove pure, and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and, once I've stamped it there, I'll lay aside my doubts for ever! [Exit.

ACT V.

Scene I.—Julia's Dressing Room.

JULIA.

Julia. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone? O Faulkland! how many unhappy moments, how many tears, have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas, Julia! I am come to take a long farewell!

Julia. Heav'ns! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch whose life is forfeited: nay, start not; the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me: I left you, fretful and passionate,—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel; the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly!—Oh, Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought, that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian; I now entrust my person to your honour—we will fly together: when safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a

cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude!—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you, beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment.—No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love.—But let us not linger—Perhaps this delay——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark: yet am I grieved to think, what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act? I know not whether 'tis so, but, sure, that alone can never make us unhappy.—The little I have will be sufficient to support us, and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose, companion, beyond your patience to endure.

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over, and console you: one, who by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and, with this useless device, I throw away all my doubts, How shall I plead to be forgiven this last, unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened, as you related ?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own, that it was all pretended ; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault, which never can be repeated : but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland !—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, heaven knows, how sincerely I rejoice ! These are tears of thankfulness for that ! But, that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang, more keen than I can express !

Faulk. By Heav'n's ! Julia——

Julia. Yet hear me—My father loved you, Faulkland ! and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me ! in his presence, I pledged my hand—joyfully pledged it, where, before, I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me, that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection : hence, I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me, from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating, how you have trifled with my sincerity.

Faulk. I confess it all ! yet, hear——

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself, that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary ! I now see, that it is not in your nature to be content, or confident, in love. With this conviction, I never will be yours. While I had hopes, that my persevering attention, and unrepublishing kindness, might, in time, reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you ; but

I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one, who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour!—If, after this——

Julia. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which, alone, has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity; and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one, who would have followed you in beggary through the world! [Exit.

Faulk. She's gone!—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. O fool!—dolt!—barbarian! Cursed as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side!—I must now haste to my appointment.—Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene!—I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love!—tormenter!—fiend! whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness!

[Exit.

Enter MAID and LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here, just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. [Exit.

Lydia. Heigho!—Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe, one lecture from my grave cousin, will make me recal him.

Enter JULIA.

Oh, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation ! Lud, child ! what's the matter with you ? You have been crying !—I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you !

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness :—Something has flurried me a little.—Nothing that you can guess at.

Lydia. Ah ! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them.—You know who Beverley proves to be ?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr. Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one ! but I don't care, I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia——

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking, when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last ?—There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements !—so becoming a disguise !—so amiable a ladder of ropes !—Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop ! and such paragraphs in the newspapers !—Oh, I shall die with disappointment !

Julia. I don't wonder at it.

Lydia. Now—sad reverse !—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation, with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar ; or perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly, fat clerk, ask the consent of every butcher in the parish, to join John Absolute, and Lydia Languish, spinster ! Oh, that I should live, to hear myself called spinster !

Julia. Melancholy, indeed !

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear, deli-

cious shifts, I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow!—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck, like a dripping statue!—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough, so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! and while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmed would he press me, to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. Oh, Lud! what has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS. MALAPROP and DAVID.

Mrs. M. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, paracide, and simulation, going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found, to prevent the anti-strophe!

Julia. For heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Lydia. Oh, patience!—Do, ma'am, for heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

Mrs. M. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter!—But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Julia. Do speak, friend.

[*To DAVID.*

David. Lookye, my lady—by the mass, there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement, with fire-arms, firelocks, fire engines, fire screens, fire office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.—To be sure, Captain Absolute —

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master, of course, is, or was, 'Squire Acres.—Then comes 'Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs. M. Oh, fie! it would be very inelegant in us: we should only participate things.

David. Ah, do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives!—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that bloodthirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. M. Sir Lucius O'Trigger!—O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape?—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrefactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs. M. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—here, friend—you can show us the place?

David. Oh, never fear; we shall find it out by the report of the pistols. [*Exeunt, he talking.*]

Scene II.—King's Mead-fields.

SIR LUCIUS and ACRES, with pistols.

Acres. By my valour, then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance—Odds levels and aims!—I say, it is a good distance.

Sir L. Is it, for muskets, or small field-pieces? upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave these things to me.—Stay, now—I'll show you. [*Measures paces along the stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Z—ds! we might as well fight in a sentry-

box ! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the further he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir L. 'Faith, then, I suppose you would aim at him best of all, if he was out of sight !

Acres. No, Sir Lucius—but I should think forty, or eight and thirty yards——

Sir L. Pho ! pho ! nonsense ! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no !—by my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near ! Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot :—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me !

Sir L. Well—the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you ?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand——

Sir L. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus !

Sir L. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled, and sent home ?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey ?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled !—Snug lying in the Abbey !—Odds tremors ! Sir Lucius, don't talk so !

Sir L. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before ?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir L. Ah, that's a pity !—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot ?

Acres. Odds files ! I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius, there—[*Puts himself in an attitude.*]—a side-

front, hey?—Odd, I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edgeways.

Sir L. Now, you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [Levelling at him.]

Acres. Z—ds, Sir Lucius! are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir L. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir L. Pho! be easy—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir L. But, there—fix yourself so—[Placing him.] let me see the broad side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do you any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir L. Ay, may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Lookye! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—so, by my valour! I will stand edge ways.

Sir L. [Looking at his watch.] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—hah! no, 'faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!—

Sir L. Ay, who are those yonder, getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed! well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir L. Run!

Acres. No, I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir L. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing, nothing, my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir L. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay, true—my honour—do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two, every now and then, about my honour.

Sir L. Well, here they're coming. [Looking.

Acres. Sir Lucius, if I wan't with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me! valour will come and go.

Sir L. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes, my valour is certainly going! it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were, at the palms of my hands!

Sir L. Your honour—your honour. Here they are.

Acres. Oh, mercy!—now, that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir L. Gentlemen, your most obedient—hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account?

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Capt. Abs. Harkye, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir L. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly. So, Mr. Beverley, [To FAULKLAND.] if you choose your weapons, the Captain and I will measure the ground,

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends!

Sir L. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir L. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game—you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party, by sitting out.

Capt. Abs. Oh pray, Faulkland, fight, to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter.

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a christian—Look ye, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir L. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody, and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no, Sir Lucius, I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face! If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Capt. Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person, who assumed that name, is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir L. Well, this is lucky. Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute!—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Z—ds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me be so unnatural!

Sir L. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you a snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you,

and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir L. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. Lookye, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—Coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. —I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir L. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Capt. Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres.—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week; don't you Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!—

Sir L. Well, then, Captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor, [*Draws his sword.*]—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Capt. Abs. Come then, sir; [*Draws.*] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter SIR ANTHONY, DAVID, and the WOMEN.

David. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his Majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his

Majesty !—Z—ds ! sirrah, then how durst you draw the King's sword against one of his subjects ?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I tell you, that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, sir ! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons ?

Sir L. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Z—ds, Jack ! how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook ?

Mrs. M. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so ?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Capt. Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am ?

Mrs. M. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced ; speak, child.

Sir L. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here—I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir ?

Sir L. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir ; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Capt. Abs. Oh, my little angel, say you so ?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront, which you affirm I have given you, I can only say, that it could not have been intentional. . . And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured

with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife, without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir L. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chooses to deny her own hand-writing here—
[*Takes out letters.*]

Mrs. M. Oh, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps, there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir L. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[*LYDIA and ABSOLUTE walk aside.*]

Mrs. M. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir L. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. M. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir L. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Capt. Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir L. Hah ! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune ?

Acres. Odds wrinkles ! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive ; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. M. O Sir Anthony !—men are all barbarians—

[*All retire but JULIA and FAULKLAND.*

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman ! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak !

Faulk. Julia !—how can I sue for what I so little deserve ? I dare not presume—yet hope is the child of penitence.

Julia. Oh ! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be bless'd indeed !—

[*SIR ANTHONY comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here ?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.—Come, Julia, I never interfered before ; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you—There, marry him directly, Julia, you'll find he'll mend surprisingly !

[*The rest come forward.*

Sir L. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content ; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better—

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr. Faulkland, the same.—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour, to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope, to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Capt. Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bit-
ters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I——

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it, hey! Mr. Modesty!—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so: and while hope pictures to us a flattering scene of happiness, let us deny its pencil those colours, which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts diffusing happiness would unite their fortunes, virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill judging passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends most, when its leaves are dropp'd!

[*Excunt omnes.*

THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM;

A COMEDY.

BY
ARTHUR MURPHY.

025

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LOVEMORE.
SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.
SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.
WILLIAM.
SIDEBOARD.

THE WIDOW BELMOUR.
MRS. LOVEMORE.
LADY CONSTANT.
MUSLIN.
MIGNIONET.
FURNISH.

SCENE—London.

THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM.

ACT I.

Scene I.—A Room in Lovemore's House.

WILLIAM at cards with a brother Servant.

Will. A plague on it!—I've turn'd out my game:—
Is forty-seven good?

Serv. Equal.——

Will. A plague go with it—tearse to a queen——

Serv. Equal.

Will. I've ruin'd my game, and be hang'd to me. I
don't believe there's a footman in England plays with
worse luck than myself.—Four aces is fourteen!

Serv. That's hard:—cruel, by Jupiter!

Will. Four aces is fourteen—fifteen. [Plays.

Serv. There's your equality.

Will. Very well——sixteen—[Plays.] seventeen—
[Plays.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed!—You're so
fond of the vices of your betters, that you're scarce out
of your beds, when you must pretend to imitate them
and their ways, forsooth.

Will. Pr'ythee, be quiet, woman, do—Eighteen—
[Plays.

Mus. Set you up, indeed, Mr. Coxcomb——

Will. Nineteen!—Clubs—

[*Plays.*

Mus. Have done with your foolery, will ye? and send my lady word——

Will. Hold your tongue, Mrs. Muslin, you'll put us out.—What shall I play?—I'll tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to say to you or your lady.——Twenty—Diamonds! [Plays.

Mus. But I tell you, Mr. Saucebox, that my lady desires to know when your master came home last night, and how he is this morning?

Will. Pr'ythee, be quiet: I and my master are resolved to be teas'd no more by you. And so, Mrs. Go-between, you may return as you came.—What the devil shall I play?—We'll have nothing to do with you, I tell you——

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us!—But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why.

[*Snatches the cards out of his hands.*

Will. Death and fury! This meddling woman has destroyed my whole game.

Mus. Now, sir, will you be so obliging as to send an answer to her questions—How and when your rakehell master came home last night?

Will. I'll tell you what, Mrs. Muslin,—you and my master will be the death of me at last; that's what you will.—In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould: nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr. Powderpuff!—

Will. I have not indeed—And so, do you see, flesh and blood can't hold it always—I can't be for ever a slave to your whims, and your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!——

Will. Yes, second-hand airs!—You take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then, on the other hand, there's

my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have the pleasure of my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world.—Never at home till three, four, five, six, in the morning!

Mus. Ay, a vile, ungrateful man! to have so little regard for a wife that doats upon him.—And your love for me is all of a-piece. I've no patience with you both.—A couple of false, perfidious, abandoned, profligate——

Will. Hey, hey! where's your tongue running?—My master is, as the world goes, a good sort of a civil kind of a husband, and I,—heaven help me!—a poor simpleton of an amorous, constant puppy, that bears with all the follies of his little tyrant here.—Come and kiss me, you jade, come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar——Don't think to make me your dupe. I know, when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance—and I know, you're as false as my master, and give all my dues to your Mrs. Mignonet there——

Will. Hush,—not a word of that.—I'm ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret.—But to charge me with falsehood, injustice, and ingratitude! My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow.—Has been there every night this month past.—How long it will last, heaven knows! But thither he goes, and I attend him.—I ask my master,—Sir, says I, what time would you please to want me?—He gives me his answer, and then I strut by Mrs. Mignonet, without so much as tipping her one glance; she stands watering at the mouth, and “A pretty fellow, that,” says she.—“Ay, ay, gaze on,” says I, “gaze on;—I see what you would be at:—you'd be glad to have me,——you'd be glad to have

me!—But, sour grapes, my dear! I'll go home and cherish my own lovely wanton."—And so I do, you know I do.—Then, after toying with thee, I hasten back to my master—later, indeed, than he desires, but always too soon for him. He's loath to part; he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels.—O, to the devil I pitch such a life!—

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man then?

Will. Softly, not so fast; I have my talent to be sure! yes, yes, I have my talent; some influence over my master's mind:—But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations, and lead him as I please—and to whom?—to his wife! Pshaw! ridiculous, foolish, and absurd!

Mus. Mighty well, sir! can you proceed?

Will. I tell you, a wife is out of date now-a-days; time was—but that's all over—a wife's a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but no body takes it.

Mus. Well, I swear I could slap your impudent face.

Will. Come and kiss me, I say—

Mus. A fiddle-stick for your kisses!—while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives—

Will. I tell you, it's her own fault; why don't she strive to please him, as you do me?—Come, throw your arms about my neck—

Mus. Ay, as I used to do, Mr. Brazen!—Hush! My lady's bell rings.—How long has he been up?—When did he come home?

Will. At five this morning; rubbed his forehead, damn'd himself for a blockhead, went to bed in a peevish humour, and is now in tiptop spirits with Sir Brilliant Fashion, in the next room. [Bell rings.

Mus. O lud! that bell rings again—There, there, let me be gone. [She kisses him, and exit.

Will. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person: 'tis well I have not told her the whole of my master's secrets: she'll blab that he visits this widow from Bath. But if they inquire, they'll be told he does not—The plot lies deeper than they are aware of, and so they will only get into a puzzle—hush!—yonder comes my master and Sir Brilliant—Let me get out of the way.—Here Tom, help me to take away the things.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter LOVEMORE and SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Lov. Ha! ha!—my dear Sir Brilliant—I must both pity and laugh at you—I'll swear thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!—

Sir Bril. Nay, pr'ythee, Lovemore, truce with your raillery—it is for sober advice that I apply to you——

Love. Sober advice!—ha! ha!—Thou art very far gone indeed.—Sober advice! There is no such thing as talking seriously and soberly to the tribe of lovers—That eternal absence of mind that possesses ye all—There is no society with you—I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd; but a dose of matrimony has brought me back again to myself; has cooled me pretty handsomely, I assure you;—Ay! and here comes *repetatur Haustus*.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and desires to know how you are this morning?

Love. O lord! my head aches woefully—it's the devil to be teased in this manner—What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady sent to know how you do, sir—

Love. O, right!—your lady——give her my compliments, and I am very well: tell her——

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out without seeing her.

Love. There again now!—tell her—tell her what you will—I shall be glad to see her—I'll wait on her—any thing—what you will.

Mus. I shall let my lady know, sir. [Exit.

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, you see I am an example before your eyes.—Put the Widow Bellmour entirely out of your head, and let my Lord Etheridge—

Sir Bril. Positively no!—My pride is piqued, and if I can, my Lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he is aware of.

Enter WILLIAM,

Will. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and has sent his servant to know if your honour is at home.

Love. By all means—I shall be glad to see Sir Bashful. [Exit WILLIAM.] Now here comes another mortifying instance to deter you from all thoughts of marriage.

Sir Bril. Pshaw! hang him; he is no instance for me—a younger brother, who has lived in middling life; comes to an estate and a title on the death of a consumptive baronet, marries a woman of quality, and carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life—Hang him!—he is no example for me.

Love. But he is a good deal improved since that time.

Sir Bril. Po! a mere Hottentot; unacquainted with life,—blushes every moment, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you have some design upon him.

Love. Why, I fancy, I can explain that—I have found out a part of his character lately.—You must know, there is nothing he dreads so much as being an object of ridicule: and so, let the customs and fashions of the world be ever so absurd, he complies, lest he should be laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, through the fear of being ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Just so.—And then, to see him shrink back as it were, from your observation, casting a jealous and fearful eye all around him. [*Mimics him.*]

Sir Bril. Ha! ha!—that's his way—but there is something worse in him——his behaviour to his lady—Ever quarrelling, and insulting her with nonsense about the dignity of a husband, and his superior reason.

Love. Why, there again now; his fear of being ridiculous, may be at the bottom of that.—I don't think he hates my Lady Constant—She is a fine woman, and knows the world.—There is something mysterious in that part of his conduct.

Sir Bril. Mysterious! not to you—he is ever consulting you—you are in all his secrets.

Love. Yes, but I never can find any of them out! And yet there is something working within, that he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he returns again into himself, and ends just where he began.—Hark! I hear his chariot at the door.

Sir Bril. Why do you let him come after you?—he is a sad troublesome fellow, Lovemore.

Love. Nay, you are too severe——Come, he has fits of good-nature.

Sir Bril. His wife has fits of good-nature, you mean—How goes on your design there?

Love. Po, po! I have no design; but I take it, you are a formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Who, I? Pshaw! no such thing.

Love. Never deny it to me;—I know you have made advances.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, I pity my Lady Constant, and cannot bear to see her treated as she is.

Love. Well, that's generous—have a care; I hear

him—Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things—ha! ha!—Hush! here he comes.

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, a good morning to you——
Sir Brilliant, your servant, sir.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I am heartily glad to see you
—I hope you left my lady well.

Sir Bash. I can't say, sir; I am not her physician.

Sir Bril. What a brute!—Well, Lovemore, I must be gone.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Bril. I must—I promised to call on a lady over the way—A relation of mine from Wiltshire—I shan't stay long.

Love. Very well—a l'honneur.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, your servant—Mr. Lovemore, yours. *[Exit.]*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I am glad he is gone; for I have something to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife!

Love. I am sorry for it, Sir Bashful—I am perfectly glad of it. *[Aside.]*

Sir Bash. Ay! and pretty warm the quarrel was.—
“Sir Bashful,” says she, “I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this rate—you know my pin-money is not sufficient—My mercer has been with me again—I can't bear to be dunn'd at this rate:” and then she added something about her quality—you know, Mr. Lovemore, *[Smiling.]* she is a woman of quality.

Love. Yes, and a fine woman too!

Sir Bash. No—no—no—do you think she is a fine woman?

Love. Most certainly—A very fine woman!

Sir Bash. *[Smiling.]* Why, yes—I think she is

what you may call a fine woman.—She keeps good company, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, that she does; your tiptop; none else;—but one would not encourage her too much, for all that, Mr. Lovemore—The world would think me but a weak man if I did.

Love. The world will talk, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. So it will;—and so I answered her stoutly. “Madam,” says I, “a fig for your quality—don’t quality me—I’ll act like a man of sense, madam, and I’ll be master in my own house, madam;—I have made a provision for the issue of our marriage in the settlement, madam; and I would have you to know, that I am not obliged to pay for your cats and your dogs, and your squirrels, and your monkeys, and your gaming debts.”

Love. How could you? That was too sharply said——

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, I gave it her—but for all that [*Smiling.*] I—I—I am—very good-natured at the bottom, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I dare say you are, Sir Bashful——

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; but a man must keep up his own dignity—I’ll tell you what I did—I went to the mercer’s myself, and paid him the money. [*Smiles at him.*]

Love. Did you?

Sir Bash. I did: but then one would not let the world know that—No, no.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too uxorious.

Love. So it would!—I must encourage that notion of his. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. And so I told him; “Mr. Lutestring,” says I, “mum’s the word—there is your money; but let nobody know that I paid you sily.”

Love. Well, you have the handsomest way of doing a genteel thing——

Sir Bash. But that is not all I have to tell you.

Love. No !

Sir Bash. No—no—[*Smiles.*] I have a deeper secret than that.

Love. Have ye ?

Sir Bash. I have ;—may I trust you ?

Love. O ! upon my honour——

Sir Bash. Well, well ! I know you are my friend—I know you are, and I have great confidence in you. Lookye, Mr. Lovemore, you must know——

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. Sir, my lady desires to know, if you will drink a dish of tea with her this morning ?

Love. I desire I may not be teased in this manner—tell your mistress—go—go about your business——

[*Turns her out.*

Sir Bash. [*Aside*] Ay ! I see he don't care a cherry-stone for his wife.

Love. I hate this interruption—Well, Sir Bashful——

Sir Bash. No ; he does not care a pinch of snuff for her. [*Aside.*

Love. Well—Proceed, Sir Bashful——

Sir Bash. It does not signify, Mr. Lovemore ; it's a foolish affair ; I won't trouble you about it——

Love. Nay, that's unkind——

Sir Bash. Well, well ! come, I will—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us ?

Love. Not a syllable—Come, come, we are safe——

Sir Bash. Let me ask you a question first—Pray now, have you any regard for your lady ?

Love. The highest value for her.

Sir Bash. I repose it with you.—You must know, Mr. Lovemore—as I told you—I am at the bottom very good-natured ; and though appearances may in some sort—[*SIR BRILLIANT rings without.*] We are interrupted again.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Well, I have paid my visit, Lovemore.

Love. This is the most cross accident—So, Sir Brilliant!

Sir Bash. Ah! I see there is no going on now——

Mr. Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Po! Pr'ythee—you shan't go.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; another time—Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock—nobody shall interrupt us there.

[*Aside to LOVEMORE.*

Love. With all my heart.

Sir Bash. Do so, then; do so—we'll be snug by ourselves.—Well, Mr. Lovemore, your servant, a good morning—Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand.—You won't forget, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Depend upon me.

Sir Bash. Very well—He is the only friend I have.

[*Exit,*

Love. Ha! ha!—you broke in upon us in the most critical moment—He was just going to communicate——

Sir Bril. I beg your pardon; I did not know——

Love. Nay, it's no matter; I shall get it out of him another time.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Pshaw! for ever teasing!—I'll wait upon her presently.

[*Exit. MUSLIN.*

Sir Bril. I'll step and entertain her while you dress—May I take that liberty, Lovemore?

Love. You know you may—no ceremony—how could you ask such a question?—apropos—But, Sir Brilliant, first step one moment into my study—I want just one word with you.

Sir Bril. I attend you.

Love. This absurd Sir Bashful! ha! ha! a ridiculous, unaccountable——ha! ha!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—Another Apartment.

MRS. LOVEMORE, and a MAID attending her.

Mrs. Love. This trash of tea!—I don't know why I drink so much of it.—Heigho!—I wonder what keeps Muslin—Do you step, child, and see if she is come back.

Maid. Yes, Ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Surely, never was any poor woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such an open, undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mrs. Love. Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr. William; and he says, as how my master came home according to custom, at five this morning, and in a huge pickle.—He is now in his study, and has Sir Brilliant Fashion with him.

Mrs. Love. Is he there again?

Mus. He is, ma'am; and as I came by the door, I heard them both laughing as loud as any thing.

Mrs. Love. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn; and all at my cost too!—Heigho!

Mus. Dear ma'am, why will you chagrine yourself about a vile man, that is not worth—no, as I live and breathe,—not worth a single sigh!

Mrs. Love. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am! Lard!—If I was as you, I'd do for him;—as I am a living christian, I would.—If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comforts, that's what I would.

Mrs. Love. Heigho!—I have no comfort.

Mus. No comfort, ma'am?—Whose fault then?—Would any body but you, ma'am——It provokes me to think of it.—Would any body, ma'am, young and handsome as you are, with so many accomplishments, ma'am, sit at home here, as melancholy as a poor servant out of

place?—And all this, for what?—Why for a husband! and such a husband!—What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am, if you go on this way?

Mrs. Love. I care not what they say—I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will:—My troubles are my own only, and I must endeavour to bear them.—Who knows what patience may do?—If Mr. Lovemore has any feeling left, my resignation may some day or other have its effect, and incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes,—incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand.—Lard, ma'am, to be for ever pining and grieving!—Dear heart! If all the women in London, in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of all the public places?—They might turn Vauxhall to a hopgarden, make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the playhouses to a methodist preacher. We should not have the racketting with them we have now—"John, let the horses be put to—John, go to my Lady Trumpabout's, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card-tables.—John, run to my Lady Catgut, and let her ladyship know I'll wait on her to the new opera.—John, run as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr. Brandon, and tell him, I shall take it as the greatest favour on earth, if he will let me have a side-box for the new play. No excuse tell him." They wisk about the town, and rantipole it with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses, though every body knows possession has ungoddessed them all long ago; and their husbands care no more for them,—no, by jingo, no more than they do for their husbands.

Mrs. Love. You run on at a strange rate.

Mus. [*In a passion.*] Dear ma'am, 'tis enough to make a body run on—If every body thought like you——

Mrs. Love. If every body lov'd like me.

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not answered by love.—What the duce is here to do?—Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, that shall despise me for that very reason?—and, “Aye,” says he, “poor fool, I see she loves me,—the woman’s well enough, only she has one inconvenient circumstance about her: I’m married to her, and marriage is the devil.”——And then when he’s going a roguing, smiles impudently in your face, and, “My dear, divert yourself, I’m just going to kill half an hour at the chocolate-house, or to peep in at the play:—your servant, my dear, your servant.”—Fye upon ’em!—I know ’em all.—Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures:——but a husband now-a-days, ma’am, is no such a thing.—A husband now—as I hope for mercy, is nothing at all but a scare-crow; to show you the fruit, but touch it if you dare.—A husband!—the devil take ’em all!—Lord forgive me for swearing—is nothing but a bug-bear, a snap-dragon; a husband, ma’am, is——

Mrs. Love. Pr’ythee, peace with your tongue, and see what keeps that girl.

Mus. Yes, ma’am—Why, Jenny! why don’t you come up to my lady? What do you stand a gossiping there for?——A husband, ma’am, is a mere monster;—that is to say if one makes him so; then for certain, he is a monster indeed;—and if one does not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——Ma’am, was you ever at the play of Catharine and Mercutio?—The vile man calls his wife his goods, and his chattels, and his household stuff.—There you may see, ma’am, what a husband is,—a husband is——But here comes one will tell you—Here comes Sir Brilliant Fashion.—Ask his advice, ma’am.

Mrs. Love. His advice! Ask advice of the man who has estranged Mr. Lovemore’s affections from me!

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, ma’am, I think Sir

Brilliant a very pretty gentleman,—he's the very pink of the fashion!—he dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably: and then, he is so lively, and talks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss——But here he comes.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT, singing.

Sir Bril. Mrs. Lovemore, your most obedient very humble servant.——But, my dear madam, what, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *Suivante*?—You will afford me your pardon, my dear ma'am, if I avow that this does a little wear the appearance of misanthropy.

Mrs. Love. Far from it, Sir Brilliant—We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Bril. My panegyric!—Then I am come most apropos to give a helping hand towards making it complete.—Mr. Lovemore will kiss your hand presently, ma'am, he has not yet entirely adjusted his dress—In the mean time, I can, if you please, help you to some anecdotes, which will perhaps enable you to colour your canvass a little higher.

Mrs. Love. I hope you will be sure, among those anecdotes,—You may go, Muslin,—not to omit the egregious exploit of seducing Mr. Lovemore entirely from his wife.

[*She makes a sign to MUSLIN to go.—Exit MUSLIN.*]

Sir Bril. I, ma'am!—Let me perish, ma'am——

Mrs. Love. O, sir, I am no stranger to—

Sir Bril. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if ever——

Mrs. Love. Don't protest too strongly, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. May I never hold four by honours——

Mrs. Love. O, sir, it is in vain to deny——

Sir Bril. Nay, but my dear Mrs. Lovemore, give me leave.—I alienate the affections of Mr. Lovemore!—Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster

Hall?—Sir Brilliant Fashion, how say you? guilty of this indictment, or not guilty?—Not guilty poz.—Thus issue is joined;—you enter the court, and in sober sadness charge the whole plump upon me, without a word as to the how, when, and where;—no proof positive,—there ends the prosecution.

Mrs. Love. But, sir, your stating of the case—

Sir Bril. Dear ma'am, don't interrupt—

Mrs. Love. Let me explain this matter—

Sir Bril. Nay, Mrs. Lovemore, allow me fair play.—I am now upon my defence.—You will please to consider, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Lovemore is not a ward, nor I a guardian; that he is his own master to do as he pleases; that Mr. Lovemore is fond of gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment; that he knows how to live; to make use of the senses nature has given him, and pluck the fruit that grows around him.—This is the whole affair.—How say ye, gentleman of the jury?—Not guilty.—There, ma'am, you see, Not guilty.

Mrs. Love. You run on finely, Sir Brilliant;—but don't imagine that this bantering way—

Sir Bril. Acquitted by my country, ma'am, you see, —fairly acquitted!

Mrs. Love. After the very edifying counsel you give Mr. Lovemore, this loose strain of yours, Sir Brilliant, is not at all surprising; and, sir, your late project—

Sir Bril. My late project!—

Mrs. Love. Yes, sir: not content with leading Mr. Lovemore into a thousand dissipations from all conjugal affection and domestic happiness, you have lately introduced him to your Mrs. Bellmour,—

Sir Bril. Ma'am, he does not so much as know Mrs. Bellmour.

Mrs. Love. Fie upon it Sir Brilliant!—falsehood is but a poor—

Sir Bril. Falsehood I disdain, ma'am,—and I, Sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr. Lovemore, your hus-

band, is not acquainted with the Widow Bellmour. You don't know that lady, ma'am; but I'll let you into her whole history—her whole history, ma'am:—pray be seated—*[Brings chairs down.]* The Widow Bellmour is a lady of so agreeable a vivacity, that it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her.—Her manner so entertaining, such quickness of transition from one thing to another; and every thing she does, does so become her:—and then she has such a feeling heart, and such generosity of sentiment!—

Mrs. Love. Mighty well, sir!—She is a very vestal—and a vestal from your school of painting must be very curious.—But give me leave, sir—How comes it that you desist from paying your addresses in that quarter?

Sir Bril. Why, faith, I find that my Lord George Etheridge,—who I thought was out of the kingdom,—is the happy man: and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best manner I can, for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs. Love. And may I rely on this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I put the question to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eyebrow, if every syllable is not minutely true;—so that you see, ma'am, I am not the cause of your inquietude. There is not on earth a man that could be more averse from such a thing; nor a person in the world, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears ye.—*[She rises disconcerted.]* You see, my dear ma'am, we both have cause of discontent; we are both disappointed,—both crossed in love—and so, ma'am, the least we can do, is, both heartily join to—

Love more. *[Speaks within.]* William! is the chariot at the door!

Sir Bril. We are interrupted—There's my friend.

Enter Lovemore.

Love. Very well—let the chariot be brought round directly.—How do you do this morning, my dear? Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon.—How do you do, my dear? *[With an air of cold civility.]*

Mrs. Love. Only a little indisposed in mind, and indisposition of the mind is of no sort of consequence—not worth a cure.

Love. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore—Indisposition of the mind——Sir Brilliant, that is really a mighty pretty ring you have on your finger.

Sir Bril. A bauble:—will you look at it?

Mrs. Love. Though I have but few obligations to Sir Brilliant, yet I fancy I may ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. *[Looking at the ring.]* Nay, now positively you wrong me;—I was obliged to you for your civil inquiries concerning me this morning; and so, on my part, I came to return the compliment before I go abroad.—Upon my word, 'tis very prettily set.

[Gives it.]

Mrs. Love. Are you going abroad, sir?

Love. A matter of business,—I hate business—but business must be done. *[Examining his ruffles.]* Pray is there any news?—any news, my dear?

Mrs. Love. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company to dinner?

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, because I can give no direct positive answer to it;—as things happen—perhaps I may—perhaps may not.—But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you;—it is not material where a body eats.—Apropos—you have heard what happened? *[To Sir Brilliant.]*

Sir Bril. When and where?

Love. A word in your ear—Ma'am, with your permission—

Mrs. Love. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr. Lovemore—

Love. Pshaw! pr'ythee, now—How can you, my dear?—That's very peevish now, and ill-natured. It is but about a mere trifle——Harkye, [*whispers*] I lost every thing I play'd for, after you went,—The foreigner and he understand one another.—I beg pardon, ma'am, it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs. Love. The opera, Mr. Lovemore, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. You wrong me now; I declare, you wrong me;—and if it will give you any pleasure, I'll sup at home.—Can't we meet at the St. Alban's to-night?

[*Aside to SIR BRILLIANT.*

Mrs. Love. I believe, I need not tell you what pleasure that would give me: but unless the pleasure is mutual, Mr. Lovemore——

Love. Ma'am, I—I—I perceive all the delicacy of that sentiment; but—a—I shall incommode you;—you possibly may have some private party—and it would be very unpolite in me, to obstruct your schemes of pleasure.—Would it not, Sir Brilliant? [*Laughs.*

Sir Bril. It would be gothic to the last degree—Ha! ha!

Love. Ha! ha!—To be sure; for me to be of the party, would look as if we lived together like our friend Sir Bashful Constant and his lady, who are for ever like two game cocks, ready armed to goad and wound one another most heartily—Ha! ha!

Sir Bril. The very thing—Ha! ha!

Love. So it is—so it is! [*Both stand laughing.*

Mrs. Love. Very well, gentlemen! you have it all to yourselves.

Love. Odso!— [*looking at his watch.*] I shall be beyond my time.—Any commands into the city, madam?

Mrs. Love. Commands!—I have no commands, sir.

Love. I have an appointment there at my banker's,
—Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

Sir Bril. What, he that was in parliament?

Love. The same.—Entire Butt, I think, was the name of the borough.—Ha! ha! ha!—Can I set you down any where, Sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Can you give me a cast in St. James's-street?

Love. By all means—*Allons*—Mrs. Lovemore, your most obedient, ma'am.—Who waits there?—Mrs. Lovemore, no ceremony—your servant. [*Exit, singing.*]

Sir Bril. Ma'am, you see I don't carry Mr. Lovemore abroad now—I have the honour, ma'am, to take my leave—I shall have her, I see plainly;—Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and your business is done. [*Aside.*]
Ma'am, your most obedient. [*Exit.*]

Enter MUSLIN, hastily.

Mus. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. To be insulted thus by his loose confident carriage!—

Mus. As I live and breathe, ma'am, if I was as you, I would not flutter myself about it.

Mrs. Love. About what?

Mus. La! what signifies mincing matters?—I overheard it all.

Mrs. Love. You did!—did you? [*Angrily.*]

Mus. Ma'am!

Mrs. Love. It does not signify at present.

Mus. No, ma'am, it does not signify, and revenge is sweet, I think; and, by my troth! I don't see why you should stand on ceremony with a husband that stands upon none with you.

Mrs. Love. Again!—Pr'ythee, Mrs. Malapert, none of your advice.—How dare you talk in this manner to me?—Let me hear no more of this impertinent freedom. [*Walks about.*]

Mus. No, ma'am.—It's very well, ma'am.—I have done, ma'am.— [*Disconcerted, and then she speaks aside.*] —What the devil is here to do?—An unmannerly thing, to go for to buff me in this manner!—

Mrs. Love. [*Still walking about.*] To make his character public, and render him the subject of every tea-table throughout this town, would only serve to widen the breach, and, instead of his neglect, might call forth his anger, and settle at last into a fixed aversion.—Lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance, would ensue.—No,—I must avoid that,—if possible, I will avoid that.—What must be done?

Mus. What can she be thinking of now?—The sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am!—What can she mean?—Did you speak to me, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. Suppose I were to try that!—Muslin.

Mus. Ma'am!—Now for it——

Mrs. Love. You heard Sir Brilliant deny that Mr. Lovemore visits at this Widow Bellmour's.

Mus. Lard, ma'am, he is as full of fibs as a French milliner,—he does visit there,—I know it all from William,—I'll be hang'd in my own garters, if he does not.

Mrs. Love. I know not what to do!—Heigho!—Let my chair be got ready instantly.

Mus. Your chair, ma'am!—Are you going out, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. Don't tease me with your talk, but do as I bid you,—and bring my cloak down to the parlour immediately.—Heigho! [*Exit.*]

Mus. What is in the wind now!—An ill-natured puss, not to tell me what she is about.—It's no matter,—she does not know what she is about.—Before I'd lead such a life as she does, I'd take a lover's leap into Rosamond's pond.—I love to see company, for my part, and not to be mop'd to death here with her humdrum ways—tease, tease, tease—"Heigho! Muslin, go to

William—where's his master?—when did he come home?—how long has he been up?—how does he do?" with the same thing over and over again, to the end of the chapter.—A fine life, indeed, for a person that has such fine spirits as I have by nature; it's enough to ruin my constitution. I love to see company, for my part.—Bless me! I had like to have forgot, there's that Mrs. Marmalet comes to my rout to-night.—I had as lieve she had stay'd away—She's nothing but mere lumber—so formal—she won't play above shilling whist: who the devil does she think is to make a shilling party for her? No such thing to be done now-a-days—nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to send for the trades-people—but I sha'n't let myself down at that rate for Madam Marmalet, I promise you. [Exit,

ACT II.

Scene I.—Sir Bashful Constant's,

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

[Knock.]

Sir Bash. Did not I hear a knock at the door?—Yes, yes, I did—the coach is just driving away.—Ay, ay, I am right enough—Sideboard! Sideboard!—come hither, Sideboard!—I must know who it is.—My wife keeps the best company in England—but I must be cautious—servants love to peep into the bottom of their master's secrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Whose coach was that at the door just now?

Side. The Duchess of Hurricane's, please your honour,

Sir Bash. The Duchess of Hurricane's!—a woman of great rank.—The Duchess of Hurricane, Sideboard! What did she want?

Side. I can't say, your honour—She left this card,

Sir Bash. A card!—Let me see it.— [Reads.

The Duchess of Hurricane's compliments to Lady Constant; she has left the rooks, and the country squires, and the crows, and the fox-hunters, and the hounds, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter; and lets her ladyship know, that she sees company, at Hurricane House, on Wednesdays, for the remainder of the season.

Make me thankful! Here's a card from a duchess! [Aside.] What have you in your hand?

Side. Cards that have been left here all this morning, your honour.

Sir Bash. All the morning!—Why, I may as well—may as well keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly—I won't bear this, Sideboard; I can't bear it— [Aside.] Ha! ha! ha!—Let me see,—let me see!

Side. There, your honour. [Gives the cards.

Sir Bash. What! all these this morning, Sideboard?

Side. Yes, please your honour.

Sir Bash. This is too much, Sideboard—it is too much, indeed! Ha! ha! ha! [Aside.] I can't bear it, Sideboard!—No, no,—I cannot bear it.—Ha! ha! ha! [Aside.] Make me thankful! All people of tiptop condition to visit my wife. Ha! ha! ha! [Aside,

Enter FURNISH.

What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. Nothing, sir; nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

Fur. To do, sir?—Only to tell the chairmen they must go out with the chair this evening, and Black

George with a flambeau before them, to pay some visits, that's all.

Sir Bash. What polite ways people of fashion have of being intimate with one another!—An empty chair to return visits for her!—I can't help laughing at it.—Ha! ha! ha!—I like to see her do like other people. [*Aside.*] But I shall be found out by my servants—I tell you, Sideboard, and I tell you too, Mrs. Impertinence, that my lady leads a life of folly, and noise, and hurry, and cards, and dice, and absurdity, and nonsense; and I won't bear it—I am resolv'd I will not.—I think I hear her coming! I do—I do.—I will not go on this way! and now, I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

She looks charmingly to-day! [*Aside.*] So, my Lady Constant—I have had my house full of duns again to-day.

Lady Con. Obliging creatures, to call so often!—What did they want?

Sir Bash. What did they want!—They wanted their money.

Lady Con. Well, and you paid them—did not you?

Sir Bash. I pay them!—'Sdeath, madam! what do you take me for?

Lady Con. I took you for a husband, but I find I was mistaken.

Sir Bash. Death and fire!—I see you're an ungrateful woman—I am sure, my Lady Constant, I have behav'd with great good-nature to you.—Did not I go into parliament, madam, to please you?—Did not I go and get drunk at a borough for a month together; ay, and mobbed at the George and Vulture, and pelted and horse-whipp'd the day before election,—and all this, to please you?—Did not I stand up in the House to make a speech merely to gratify your pride?—And did not I expose myself there?—Did I know whether I

stood upon my head or my heels?—What the devil had I to do in parliament? What's my country to me?

Lady Con. Who mentioned your country, sir?

Sir Bash. I desire you won't mention it—I have nothing to do with it.—No, nor with your debts—I have nothing to do with them; and I desire you will tell your people to come no more after me.—I know how to prevent that—notice in the Gazette will exempt me from your extravagancies.—I did not live in the Temple for nothing!

Fur. I protest I never heard any body talk so mean in all my days before.

Lady Con. Don't you be so pert, pray.—Leave the room—go both of you down stairs.

[*Exeunt FURNISH and SIDEBBOARD.*]

Sir Bash. I have kept it up pretty well before my servants. She's a fine woman, and talks admirably!

[*Aside.*]

Lady Con. Is there never to be an end of this usage, Sir Bashful?—Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

Sir Bash. Humours!—I like that expression prodigiously!—Humours indeed!

Lady Con. You may harp upon the word, sir.—Humours you have, sir, and such as are become insupportable.

Sir Bash. She talks like an angel! [*Aside.*] Madam, [*moderating his voice*] I should have no humours, as you call them, if your extravagancies were not insupportable.—What would the world say?—Let us canvass the matter quietly and easily—what would the world think of my understanding, if I was seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady Con. What will they think of it now, sir?—Take this along with you, there is a certain set of people, who, when they would avoid an error, are sure to fall into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. There's for you!—That's a translation from Horace—*Dum vitant stulti vitia.*—O, she is a notable woman! *[Aside.*

Lady Con. Let me tell you, Sir Bashful, there is not in the world a more ridiculous sight, than a person wrapping up himself in imaginary wisdom—if he can but guard against one giant-vice, while he becomes an easy prey to a thousand other absurdities.

Sir Eash. Lord, I am nothing at all to her in an argument! She has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses—I could almost find in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—*[Aside.]* Lookye, madam, you know I am good-natur'd at the bottom, and any thing in reason——

Lady Con. When did I desire any thing else?—Is it unreasonable to live with decency?—Is it unreasonable to keep the company I have always been us'd to?—Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when our own fortune can so well afford it?—

Sir Bash. She's a very reasonable woman, and I wish I had but half her sense! *[Aside.]* I'll tell you what, my Lady Constant, to avoid eternal disputes, if a sum of money, within moderate compass, would make matters easy—I know you have contracted habits in life—and I know the force of habit is not easily conquer'd.—I would not have her conquer it: my pride would be hurt if she did. *[Aside.]* And so, madam, if a brace of hundreds—why should not I give her three hundred? *[Aside.]* I did not care if I went as far as three hundred—if three hundred pounds, my Lady Constant, will settle the matter—why, as to the matter of three hundred pounds——

Enter FURNISH, with a bandbox.

Fur. Your ladyship's things are come home from the milliner's. *[Showing the bandbox.*

Sir Bash. Zookers! this woman has overheard me!

[*Aside.*] As to the matter of three hundred pounds, madam, [*loud, in a passion*] let me tell you it is a very large sum—ask me for three hundred pounds, madam!—Do you take me for a blockhead?

Lady Con. What does the man fly out so for?

Sir Bash. What right have you to three hundred pounds? I will allow no such doings—is not my house an eternal scene of your routs, and your drums, and your what-dye-call-'ems?—Don't I often come home when the hall is barricado'd with powder-monkey servants, that I can hardly get within my own doors?

Lady Con. What is the meaning of all this, sir?

Sir Bash. Have not I seen you at a game at loo, put the fee simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card?—And have not I mutter'd to myself—If that woman now were as much in love with me, as she is with pam, what an excellent wife she would make?

Lady Con. Yes, I have great reason to love you, truly!

Sir Bash. Death and fire!—You are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my child resemble one of the court cards, or mark'd in the forehead with a pair-royal of aces. I tell you, once for all, you are an ungovernable woman—your imaginations are as wild as any woman's in Bedlam.—Do go thither, go; for I tell you, once for all, I'll allow no such doings in my house. [*Exit SIR BASHFUL.*]

Lady Con. His head is certainly turn'd!—Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. See it!—no, nor bear it neither.—Your ladyship will never be rightly at ease, I'm afraid, till you part with him.

Lady Con. Oh, never; it is impossible!—He not only has lost all decency, but seems to me to have bid adieu to all humanity.—That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! But I'll think no more of him.

Fur. Oh, madam, I had quite forgot; Mrs. Lovemore's servant is below, and desires to know if your ladyship would be at home this morning.

Lady Con. Yes, I shall be at home.—Step with me to my room, and I'll give you a card to send Mrs. Lovemore.—Of all things let a woman be careful how she marries a narrow-minded, under-bred husband.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR BASHFUL and LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr. Lovemore, walk in!—I am heartily glad to see you!—This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you are a friend indeed.

Love. You do me honour, Sir Bashful.—Pray how does my lady?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well!—I never saw her look better.—We have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another!—and I did not bate her an ace.—But I told you I had something for your private ear—Pray now, have you remark'd any thing odd or singular in me?

Love. Not the least—I never knew a man with less oddity in my life.

Sir Bash. What, nothing at all? He, he! [*Smiles at him.*] Have you remark'd nothing about my wife?

Love. You don't live happy with her—but that is not singular.

Sir Bash. Po!—I tell you, Mr. Lovemore, I am at the bottom a very odd fellow.

Love. Not at all.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, yes,—I am—I am indeed—as odd a fish as lives—and you must have seen it before now.

Love. Not I, truly! You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail o'the head—no—no—not jealous. Do her justice, I am secure there—my lady has high notions of honour. It is not that.

Love. What then?

Sir Bash. Can't you guess?

Love. Not I, upon my soul!—Explain.

Sir Bash. He, he! [*Smiling and looking simple.*] You could never have imagined it—I blush at the very thoughts of it. [*Turns away.*]

Love. Come, come, be a man, Sir Bashful—out with it at once, let me be of your council——

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you.—Some men there are, who when a confidence is once repos'd in them, take occasion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

Love. Oh fie!—This is ungenerous!—True friendship is of another quality—it feels from sympathy, and is guarded by honour.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have no further doubt of you—and so——Stay, stay a moment—let me just step to the door. [*Goes on tiptoe.*]

Love. Jealousy has laid hold of him. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Servants have a way of listening.

[*Pushes the door open with both hands.*]

Love. He has it, through his very brain! [*Aside.*]
What has he got in his head?

Sir Bash. No, no—all's safe—there was nobody. Mr. Lovemore, I will make you the depositary—the faithful depositary, of a secret, which to you will appear a mystery. My inclinations, Mr. Lovemore——nay, but you'll laugh at me.

Love. No—upon my honour!—No, no.

Sir Bash. Well, well, well.—My inclinations, I say, are changed—no, not changed—but—they are not what

[illegible]

Sir Bash. Let me alone; I know what I'm about—And then, Mr. Lovemore, to cover this design—Ha! ha! I can take occasion to be as jealous as Bedlam, when I see her wear all her diamond baubles.

Love. So you can—I wish he may never be jealous of me in earnest. [Aside.

Sir Bash. Well, well—give us your hand—give us your hand—my dear brother sufferer—I'll tell you what, Mr. Lovemore—we can, in a sly way, do each other great service, if you will come into my scheme.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you—There are some things, which you know our wives expect to be done——

Love. What is he at now? [Aside.] So they do, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Now, if you will assist me——

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Look ye, Mr. Lovemore, my Lady Constant wants money—You know she keeps a great deal of company, and makes a great figure there—I could show my wife, Mr. Lovemore, in any company in England; I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why truly, I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But I had not those early advantages—Now you know I can't in reason be seen to give her money myself, so I would have you take the money of me, and pretend to lend it to her yourself, out of friendship and regard.

Love. Why you're a very Machiavel—nothing was ever better contrived—Here's a fellow pimping for his own horns. [Aside.

Sir Bash. Here, here, here—take the money—here it is in bank notes,—One, two, three—there's three hundred pounds—give her that—give her that, Mr. Lovemore——

Love. I will—This is the rarest adventure! [Aside.

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for your wife in return——

Love. Why I may have occasion for your friendship, Sir Bashful—that is to forgive me if ever you find me out.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. You may always command me—well, lose no time, she's above stairs—Step to her now, and make her easy.

Love. I'll do my endeavour, that you may rely upon—I'll make her easy, if possible.

Sir Bash. That's kind, that's kind!—Well, ha! ha! ha! Mr. Lovemore, is not this a rare scheme? Ha! ha! ha!

Love. 'Tis the newest way of making a wife easy—Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, let this head of mine alone.—Ha! ha!

Love. That I won't, if I can help it.

[*Exit LOVEMORE.*

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr. Lovemore! It is the luckiest thing in the world to have so good a friend! make me thankful!—he is a true friend. [Sir BRILLIANT *within.*] Hist—Did not I hear a noise?—Is not that Sir Brilliant's voice?—I hope they won't let him in—I gave orders I would not be at home—Zookers! they are letting him in—He shan't see my lady for all that—Shan't interrupt business.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand; I rejoice to see you. And my lady, how does she do? Is she at home?

Sir Bash. Do you think I have nothing to do but to know whether she is at home or not? I don't trouble my head about her, sir.

Sir Bril. Po! never talk so slightingly of so agreeable a woman—My Lady Constant has spirit, taste, sense, wit, beauty—

Sir Bash. Spirit, taste, sense, wit, beauty!—She has

all that sure enough. [*Aside.*] Sir, I am no sworn appraiser to take an inventory of her effects, and set a just value upon them—I don't know what she has.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. No, sir, she is invisible this morning—and unintelligible this morning—and incomprehensible this morning—She is not well—she has the vapours—She can't be spoke too——

Sir Bril. I'm sorry for it—I came to tell her the rarest piece of news—such a discovery!——

Sir Bash. Ay, what's that?

Sir Bril. You know Sir Amorous La Fool?

Sir Bash. Mighty well.

Sir Bril. Poor devil! he has got into such a scrape!

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Has he been bubbled at play?

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Sir Bash. He is not dead?

Sir Bril. Why that's a scrape indeed!—But it is not that; almost as bad though.

Sir Bash. He's fallen in love with some coquette, may be?

Sir Bril. No.

Sir Bash. With some prude?

Sir Bril. Nor that.

Sir Bash. An actress, may be; or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No, you'll never guess—Like a silly devil, he has fallen in love with his own wife. Ha! ha!

Sir Bash. In love with his own wife! [*Stares at him.*

Sir Bril. Ha! ha!—In love with his own wife—I heard it at my Lady Betty Scandal's—there was such laughing, and so much raillery—my dear Sir Bashful, don't you enjoy it? Ha! ha! It's so ridiculous an affair—Is it not, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Ha! ha!—Oh, ay, very ridiculous indeed! Ha! ha!—nothing can be more pleasant!—Zoons! it's my own case directly!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. The man is lost, abandon'd, ruin'd, dead, and buried—You don't laugh, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Who, I?—I—I—I—I laugh as heartily as I possibly can.

Sir Bril. I want to find Lovemore; he'll be so diverted. You know he does not care a pinch of snuff for his wife.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least, he does not care for her—no, to be sure he does not. [*Aside.*] Not he; he no more cares for his wife than I do for mine.

Sir Bril. Much the same. Poor Sir Amorous! what a ridiculous figure does he make at last—adieu for him all the joys of life! the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and the joys of freedom!—He is retired with his Penelope, to love most heartily for a month, grow indifferent to each other in two, and hate most cordially in three—Poor devil! Ha! ha!

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so?

Sir Bril. Most certainly. But I have not told you the worst of his case—Our friend, Sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was about a comedy—now what has he done, but drawn the character of Sir Amorous La Fool, and made him the hero of his piece.

Sir Bash. What! put him into a comedy?

Sir Bril. Ha! ha!—Yes, he has—It is call'd, "The Amorous Husband; or the Man in love with his own Wife."—I must send in time for places—Sir Bashful, you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. With great pleasure—You may be sure it will be a very agreeable party to me—You may depend—I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously.

Sir Bril. It will be the highest scene in nature—well, a good day!—I must drive to a thousand places and put it about—farewell! Apropos, be sure you let my lady know—It will appear to her so ridiculous—

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Certainly!—Well, your servant, your serv

vant, your servant—Poor Sir Amorous La Fool, he'll have his horns added to his coat of arms in a very little time. Ha! ha! [Exit.

Sir Bash. I see how it is; I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and nixed into a comedy.—Make me thankful! nobody knows of my affair, but Mr. Lovemore.—He can't discover against me, for his own sake.—

Enter LOVEMORE.

Well, Mr. Lovemore, well; how have you manag'd?

Love. Just as I could wish.—She is infinitely oblig'd to me, and will never forget this civility.

Sir Bash. Ten thousand thanks to you!—She suspects nothing of my being privy to it?

Love. Not the least inkling of it.—She talk'd at first something about delicacy; and thought it rather an indecorum to accept money even from a friend—But that argument was soon silenced—I told her, I could not but see what a bad husband you was.

Sir Bash. That was right, that was right!

Love. And then I talked a few sentences to her,—As, that the person receiving a civility confers the obligation—And that I was sure of wheedling you, in some goodnatur'd moment, to repay me—It was but making you my banker for a short time: and with more jargon to that purpose. And so, with some reluctance, she comply'd, and things are upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there's my wife!

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife, too.

Love. What the devil brings her here? [Aside.

Sir Bash. This is the rarest circumstance—Now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs. Lovemore. Walk in, walk in, Mrs. Lovemore.

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE and LADY CONSTANT.

Lady Con. Mrs. Lovemore, I'm glad to see you abroad, madam.

Mrs. Love. I am highly fortunate in meeting your ladyship at home.—*Mr. Lovemore*, I am glad to see you too, sir.

Love. *Mrs. Lovemore*, I thank you.

Sir Bash. Mind him now, mind him now—My Lady Constant seems quite pleas'd—She has got the money.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. I thought you were gone into the city, *Mr. Lovemore*?

Love. Why will you mind me, *Mrs. Lovemore*—I deferred going till evening.—What the devil business had she here?

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. Then I may hope you'll dine at home, sir?

Love. O lord! how can you tease a man so?

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, I see how it is—he won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard.

[*Aside.*

Lady Con. No doubt *Mr. Lovemore* will dine at home, if it gives you any satisfaction—And *Sir Bashful*, I reckon, will dine at home, for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I'll dine at home, or I'll dine abroad, for what reason I please: I am my own master, I hope, madam.—*Lovemore*, *Lovemore*! Ha! ha!

[*Aside.*

Love. Bravo!—What a silly blockhead it is! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. I see your chariot at the door, *Mr. Lovemore*—I'll send away my chair, and you may set me down.

Love. Ma'am, I have several places to call at.

Sir Bash. Cunning! cunning!—He would not be seen in a chariot with her for the world.

[*Aside.*

Lady Con. I am to have a rout to-morrow evening, *Mrs. Lovemore*: I wish you would favour us with your company.

Sir Bash. A rout to-morrow evening!—You have a rout every evening, I think. I wish, madam, you would learn to imitate *Mrs. Lovemore*, and not make a fool of me as you do.—Hip, *Lovemore*! Ha! ha!

[*Aside.*

Love. Ha! ha! Bravo!—Well, I must be gone—My Lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Ma'am, your most obedient; Sir Bashful, yours—Madam, you know I am yours.

[*Bows gravely to Mrs. Lovemore, and exit.*]

Sir Bash. He carries it off finely—Make me thankful! I have kept my own secret too, and she shall never know a word of the matter.—Mrs. Lovemore, your humble servant, madam!—Madam, you know I am yours.

[*Bows gravely to Lady Constant, and exit.*]

Mrs. Love. Two such husbands!

Lady Con. As to my swain, Mrs. Lovemore, I grant you—but you may set your mind at rest; Mr. Lovemore is at least well-bred; whereas Sir Bashful never qualifies his disrespect with the least tincture of civility.

Mrs. Love. Well, if there is any pleasure in being made miserable with civility, I must allow Mr. Lovemore a most skilful hand.—I have found out another of his intrigues, and I came on purpose to consult with your ladyship about it: there is a Widow Bellmour to whom he pays his addresses.

Lady Con. The Widow Bellmour!—

Mrs. Love. But first give me leave, Lady Constant, to tell you the whole circumstances of the affair.

Lady Con. All scandal, take my word for it.—But, if I must hear your story, let us adjourn the debate to my dressing-room, and I will promise to confute your whole accusation.—My dear Mrs. Lovemore, are you not tending a little towards jealousy?—Beware of that, ma'am; you must not look through that medium:

That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

Scene I.—A Room at the WIDOW BELLMOUR'S, in which are disposed, up and down, several Chairs, a Toilette, a Bookcase, and a Harpsichord; MIGNIONET, her Maid, is settling the Toilette.

Mig. I don't well know what to make of this same Lord Etheridge—he is coming here again to-day, I suppose; all this neatness, and all this care, must be for him. Well, it does not signify, there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour—she is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it. 'Twere a pity any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare——But she knows them all—They must rise early, who can outwit her.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR, reading a volume of Pope.

*Oh! bless'd with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She who can own a sister's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter, with unwounded ear;
That never answers, till a husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shows she rules:*

Sensible, elegant Pope!

*Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.*

[Seems to read on.]

Mig. Lord love my mistress! She's always so happy and so gay.

Mrs. Bell. These charming characters of women!—'Tis like a painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance.—Here, Mignonet, put this book in its place.

Mig. Yes, ma'am.—There, ma'am, you see your toilet looks most charmingly.

Mrs. Bell. Does it!—I think it does.—Apropos, Where's my new song?—Here it lies—I must make myself mistress of it.—Mignonet, do you know that this is a very pretty song—'tis written by my Lord Etheridge;—I positively must learn it before he comes. [*Sings a line.*] Do you know, Mignonet, that I think my lord not wholly intolerable.

Mig. Yes, ma'am, I know that.

Mrs. Bell. Do you?

Mig. And if I have any skill, ma'am, I fancy you think him more than tolerable.

Mrs. Bell. Really! then you think I like him, I suppose?—Do ye think I like him?—I don't well know how that is,—and yet I don't know but I do like him;—no,—no,—I don't like him neither, not absolutely like—but I could like, if I had a mind to humour myself.—The man has a softness of manner, an elegant turn of thinking, and has a heart—has he a heart?—yes, I think he has;—and then he is such an observer of the manners, and shows the ridiculous of them with so much humour.

Mig. Without doubt, ma'am, my lord is a pretty man enough; but lack-a-day, what o'that?—You know but very little of him,—your acquaintance is but very short—[*Mrs. Bellmour hums a tune.*] Do, pray, my dear madam, mind what I say,—for I am at times, I assure you, very speculative,—very speculative indeed; and I see very plainly——Lord, ma'am, what am I doing?—I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me, no, no more, than if I was nothing at all.——

Mrs. Bell. [*Hums a tune still.*] Why, indeed, you talk wonderfully well upon the subject.—Do you think I shall play the fool, Mignonet, and marry my lord?

Mig. You have it, ma'am, through the very heart of you—I see that.

Mrs. Bell. Do you think so?—May be I may marry,

and may be not.—Poor Sir Brilliant Fashion,—What will become of him?—But I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. There's a lady below in a chair, that desires to know if you are at home, madam?

Mrs. Bell. Has the lady no name?

Pom. She did not tell her name.

Mrs. Bell. How awkward you are!—Well, show her up. *[Exit POMPEY.]*

Mig. Had not you better receive the lady in the drawing-room, ma'am?—Things here are in such a confusion——

Mrs. Bell. No, it will do very well here. I dare say it is somebody I am intimate with, though the boy does not recollect her name.—Here she comes.

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE.—They both look with a grave surprise at each other, then courtesy with an air of distant civility.

Mrs. Bell. Ma'am, your most obedient.

[With a kind of reserve.]

Mrs. Love. Ma'am, I beg your pardon for this intrusion. *[Disconcerted.]*

Mrs. Bell. Pray, ma'am, walk in——Won't you please to be seated?—Mignonet, reach a chair.

[MRS. LOVEMORE crosses the stage, and they salute each other.]

Mrs. Love. I am afraid this visit, from one unknown to you, will be inconvenient and troublesome.

Mrs. Bell. Not at all, I dare say;—you need not be at the trouble of an apology.—Mignonet, you may withdraw. *[Exit MIGNIONET.]*

Mrs. Love. Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, ma'am, there is a particular circumstance which has determined me to take this liberty with you; for which I intreat your pardon.

Mrs. Bell. The request is wholly unnecessary ;—but a particular circumstance, you say——Pray, ma'am, to what circumstance am I indebted for this honour ?

Mrs. Love. I shall appear perhaps very ridiculous, and indeed I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing——But, ma'am, from the character you bear for tenderness of disposition and generosity of sentiment, I easily incline to flatter myself, you will not take offence at any thing ; and that if it is in your power, you will afford me your assistance.

Mrs. Bell. You may depend upon me.

Mrs. Love. I will be very ingenuous :——Pray, ma'am, an't you acquainted with a gentleman whose name is Lovemore ?

Mrs. Bell. Lovemore !——No ;—no such person in my list.——Lovemore !——I don't know him, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Ma'am, I beg your pardon—I won't trouble you any further. [Going.]

Mrs. Bell. 'Tis mighty odd, this—[*Aside.*] Madam, I must own my curiosity is a good deal excited ;—[*Takes her by the hand.*] Pray, ma'am, give me leave—I beg you will sit down,—pray don't think me impertinent—may I beg to know who the gentleman is ?

Mrs. Love. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself to you.—I have been married to him these two years ; I admired my husband for his understanding, his sentiment, and his spirit ; I thought myself as sincerely loved by him as my fond heart could wish ; but there is of late such a strange revolution in his temper, I know not what to make of it :—instead of the looks of affection, and expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, 'tis nothing now but cold, averted, superficial civility.—While abroad, he runs on in a wild career of pleasure ; and, to my deep affliction, has fix'd his affections upon another object.

Mrs. Bell. If you mean to consult with me in regard

to this case, I am afraid you have made a wrong choice ; —there is something in her appearance that affects me —[*Aside.*] Pray excuse me, ma'am, you consider this matter too deeply——Men will prove false, and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his side,—upon my word, I can't think your case the worse for that.

Mrs. Love. Not the worse!——

Mrs. Bell. On the contrary, much better. If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, he would have sunk into a downright stupid, habitual insensibility ; from which it might prove impossible to recal him.—In all love's bill of mortality, there is not a more fatal disorder ;—but your husband is not fallen into that way. By your account, he still has sentiment, and where there is sentiment, there is still room to hope for an alteration.—But in the other case, you have the pain of seeing yourself neglected, and for what?—for nothing at all ;—the man has lost all sense of feeling, and is become, to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-house.

Mrs. Love. I am afraid, ma'am, he is too much the reverse of this, too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object.

Mrs. Bell. Why, so much the better, as I told you already ;—some new idea has struck his fancy, and he will be for a while under the influence of that.

Mrs. Love. How light she makes of it ! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. But it is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety ; and to draw him daily to herself :—that is the whole affair, I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Not uneasy ! when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him !—Not uneasy ! when the man I doat on no longer fixes his happiness at home !

Mrs. Bell. Ma'am, you'll give me leave to speak my mind freely.—I have often observed, when the fiend jealousy is rous'd, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs. Love. Angry with myself, madam!—calumny can lay nothing to my charge,—the virtue of my conduct, madam—— [Rises.

Mrs. Bell. Oh, I would have laid my life, you would be at that work—that's the folly of us all.—But virtue is out of the question at present. It is *la Belle Nature*,—Nature embellished by the advantages of art, that the men expect now-a-days;—and really, ma'am, without compliment, you seem to have all the qualities that can dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those qualities, I am afraid, is suppressed.—You'll excuse my freedom, I have been married, ma'am, and am a little in the secret.—It is much more difficult to keep a heart than win one—After the fatal words, "For better for worse," the general way with wives is, to relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think that is enough:—but they are mistaken; there is a great deal wanting—an address, a manner, a desire of pleasing——

Mrs. Love. But when the natural temper——

Mrs. Bell. The natural temper must be forced—Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband, and the wife must throw infinite variety into her manner. And this, I take to be the whole mystery, the way to keep a man.—But I run on at a strange rate—Well, to be sure, I'm the giddiest creature.—Ma'am, will you now give me leave to inquire, how I came to have this favour?—Who recommended me to your notice?—And pray, who was so kind as to intimate that I was acquainted with Mr. Lovemore?

Mrs. Love. I beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given you, and I assure you, 'tis entirely owing to my being told that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs. Bell. His visits frequent here!—They have imposed upon you, I assure you—and they have told you, perhaps, that I have robbed you of Mr. Lovemore's heart?—Scandal is always buzzing about; but, I assure you, I have not meddled with his heart—O lud! I hear a rap at the door—I positively won't be at home.

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mig. Did you call, madam?

Mrs. Bell. I am not at home.

Mig. 'Tis Lord Etheridge, ma'am,—he's coming up stairs; the servants told him you were within.

Mrs. Bell. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell him there is company with me, and he won't come in.—Mignionet run to him.

Mrs. Love. Ma'am, I beg I mayn't hinder you.

Mrs. Bell. Our conversation begins to grow interesting, and I would not have you go for the world.—I won't see my lord.

Mrs. Love. I beg you will—don't let me prevent—I'll step into another room.

Mrs. Bell. Will you be so kind?—There are books in that room, if you will be so obliging as to amuse yourself there, I shall be glad to resume this conversation again.—He shan't stay long.

Mrs. Love. I beg you will be in no hurry—I can wait with pleasure.

Mrs. Bell. This is a lover of mine; and a husband and a lover should be treated in the same manner;—perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs—for heaven's sake, make haste. Mignionet, show the way.

[*Exit Mrs. Lovemore and MIGNIONET.*]

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Mr. B. B. Repairs her writing, and
your application of that phrase—
"out of repair"; like an old house
that wants a tenant?

definitely now, that's wrong. That's
 your intention. — You can't be
 sure, whatever may be the
 result of the want of a tenant. It's

1877. Bell. And so you think I really
And perhaps you imagine too, I that I
up-still, [Looking in his glass.] to-night
for. What there is a grandson to let!—I
don't think it would be a bad scheme
to do so. [He looks in his glass again.]

Law. And he who has the preference
will be very happy, if
he will get it to none but a single
person, and upon a body of land.

"What the devil does she mean
 by this?—the sinking of the affairs; I
 will presume, madam, to—
 then, it must be a
 troubled with it—
 I think I shall
 question, I make
 if it were to be
 what—what—

And does your lordship really intend to be guilty of matrimony?—Lord, what a question have I asked?—Well, to be sure, I am a very mad-cap!—My lord, don't you think me a strange mad-cap?

Love. A wildness, like yours, that arises from vivacity and sentiment together, serves only to exalt your beauty, and give new poignancy to every charm.

Mrs. Bell. Well, upon my word, you have said it finely!—But you are in the right, my lord,—I hate your pensive, melancholy beauty, that sits like a well-grown vegetable in a room for an hour together, till at last she is animated to the violent exertion of saying yes, or no, and then enters into a matter-of-fact conversation.—“Have you heard the news? Miss Beverly is going to be married to Captain Shoulderknot. My Lord Mortgage has had another tumble at Arthur's. Sir William Squanderstock has lost his election. They say short aprons are coming into fashion again.”

Love. O lord! a matter-of-fact conversation is insupportable.

Mrs. Bell. Pray, my lord, have you ever observed the manner of one lady's accosting another at Ranelagh?—She comes up to you with a demure look of insipid serenity,—makes you a solemn salute——“Ma'am, I am overjoyed to meet you,—you look charmingly.—But, dear ma'am, did you hear what happened to us all the other night?—We were going home from the opera, ma'am—you know my aunt Roly-poly—it was her coach—there was she, and Lady Betty Fidget—Your most obedient servant, ma'am——[*Courtesying to another, as it were going by.*] Lady Betty, you know, is recovered—every body thought it over with her—but Doctor Snakeroot was called in—no, not Doctor Snakeroot, Doctor Bolus it was—and so he altered the course of medicine—and so my Lady Betty recovered:—Well, there was she and Sir George Bragwell,—a pretty man, Sir George—finest teeth in

D, and the game nine-all, A and B have won three tricks, and C and D four tricks, C leads his suit, D puts up the king, then returns the suit, A passes, C puts up the queen, B trumps the next :—” and so, A and B, and C and D, are banged about, and all is jargon, confusion, uproar, and wrangling, and nonsense, and noise.—Ha ! ha !

Mrs. Eell. Ha ! ha ! A fine picture of a rout ;—but one must play sometimes—we must let our friends pick our pocket’s sometimes, or they’ll drop our acquaintance.—Pray, my lord, do you never play ?

Love. Play, ma’am !—I must lie to the end of the chapter—[*Aside.*] play ! now and then, out of necessity ;—otherwise, I never touch a card.

Mrs. Bell. Oh ! very true, you dedicate your time to the muses ; a downright rhyming peer.—Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song ?

Love. Are you ?

Mrs. Bell. I am indeed. I think you’d make a very tolerable Vauxhall poet.

Love. You flatter me, ma’am.

Mrs. Bell. No, as I live and breathe, I don’t ;—and do you know, that I can sing it already ?—Come, you shall hear me,—you shall hear it. [Sings.

SONG.

*Attend all ye fair, and I’ll tell ye the art,
To bind every fancy with ease in your chains,
To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,
And banish from Hymen his doubts and his pains.*

*When Juno accepted the cestus of love,
At first she was handsome ; she charming became ;
With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.*

*’Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire ;
The voice melting accents ; impassions the kiss ;
Confers the sweet smiles, that awaken desire,
And plants round the fair, each incentive to bliss.*

*Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that charms ;
The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve ;
The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms,
The tender disdain, the renewal of love.*

*Ye fair, take the cestus, and practise its art ;
The mind unaccomplish'd, mere features are vain,
Exert your sweet pow'r, you will conquer each heart,
And the loves, joys, and graces, shall walk in your train.*

Love. My poetry is infinitely obliged to you for the embellishments your voice and manner confer upon it.

Mrs. Bell. O, fulsome!—I sing horridly, and I look horridly.— [*Goes to the glass.*] How do I look, my lord?—But don't tell me—I won't be told.—I see you are studying a compliment, and I hate compliments;—well, what is it? let's hear your compliment—why don't you compliment me?—I won't hear it now.—But pray now, how came you to choose so grave a subject as counubial happiness?

Love. Close and particular that question. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Well, upon my word, you have drawn your picture so well in this little song, that one would imagine you had a wife at home to sit for it.

Love. Ma'am—[*Embarrassed.*] the compliment—a—you are but laughing at me—I—I—I—Zounds! I am afraid she begins to suspect me—[*Aside.*] A very scanty knowledge of the world will serve: and—and there is no need of one's own experience in these cases:—and when you, madam, are the original, it is no wonder that this copy——

Mrs. Bell. O lard, you are going to plague me again with your odious solicitations, but I won't hear them;—you must be gone.—If I should be weak enough to listen to you, what would become of Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Loee. Sir Brilliant Fashion!

Mrs. Bell. Yes, don't you know Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. No, ma'am, I don't know the gentleman:—I beg pardon, if he is your acquaintance, but from what I have heard of him, I should not choose him to be among my intimates.

Enter MIGNIONET, in a violent hurry.

Mig. O, undone! undone!

Mrs. Bell. What's the matter?

Mig. O lud! I am frightened out of my senses!—The poor lady——Where's the hartshorn drops?—

Love. The lady! What lady?

Mig. Never stand asking what lady——she has fainted away, ma'am, all of a sudden.—Give me the drops. *[Exit.*

Mrs. Bell. Let me run to her assistance.—Adieu, my lord,—I shall be at home in the evening.—My lord, you'll excuse me; I expect you in the evening. *[Exit.*

Love. I shall wait on you, ma'am.—What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit!—Ay, and to have the impudence to assume this badge of honour, to cover the most unwarrantable purposes!—But no reflection—have her I must, and that quickly too.—If I don't prevail soon, I am undone—she'll find me out:—egad, I'll be with her betimes this evening, and press her with all the vehemence of love.—Women have their soft, unguarded moments, and who knows?—But to take the advantage of the openness and gaiety of her heart! And then, my friend Sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him?—Pr'ythee, be quiet, my dear conscience; don't you be meddling; don't you interrupt a gentleman in his amusements. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect of persons, knows no laws of friendship?—besides, 'tis all my wife's fault—why don't she strive to make home agreeable?

*For foreign pleasures, foreign joy, I roam,
No thought of peace or happiness at home.*

[Going.

[SIR BRILLIANT *is heard singing within.*]

What the devil is Madam Fortune at now?—Sir Brilliant, by all that's odious!—No place to conceal in!—No escape!—The door is lock'd!—Mignonet, Mignonet! open the door!

Mignonet. [Within.] You can't come in here, sir.

Love. 'This cursed star, and this ribband, will ruin me.—Let me get off this confounded tell-tale evidence.

[Takes off the ribband in a hurry.]

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Eril. My dear madam, I most heartily rejoice——Ha!—Lovemore!

Love. Your slave, Sir Brilliant, your slave—

[Hiding the star with his hat.]

Sir Bril. How is this?—I did not think you had been acquainted here!

Love. I came to look for you,—I thought to have found you here;—and so I have scrap'd an acquaintance with the lady, and made it subservient to your purposes.—I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Bril. Well, but what's the matter?—What are you fumbling about?

[Pulls the hat.]

Love. 'Sdeath, have a care!—for heaven's sake—

[Crams his handkerchief there.]

Sir Bril. What the devil ails you?

Love. Taken so unaccountably; my old complaint——

Sir Bril. What complaint?

Love. I must have a surgeon,—occasioned by the stroke of a tennis-ball;—my Lord Rackett's unlucky left hand.—Let me pass—there is something forming there—let me pass.—To be caught is the devil.—

[Aside.] Don't name my name, you'll ruin all that I said for you, if you do.—Sir Brilliant, your servant——There is certainly something forming. [Exit.]

Sir Bril. Something forming there—I believe there is something forming here!—What can this mean?—I must have this explain'd.—Then Mrs. Lovemore's suspicions are right; I must come at the bottom of it.

Enter MRS. BELLMOUR.

My dear Mrs. Bellmour!—

Mrs. Bell. Heavens! What brings you here?

Sir Bril. I congratulate with myself upon the felicity of meeting you thus at home.

Mrs. Bell. Your visit is unseasonable—you must be gone.

Sir Bril. Madam, I have a thousand things—

Mrs. Bell. Well, well, another time.

Sir Bril. Of the tenderest import.

Mrs. Bell. I can't hear you now;—fly this moment!—I have a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir Bril. Ay, and you have had a gentleman taken ill here too.

Mrs. Bell. Do you dispute my will and pleasure!—fly this instant. [*Turns him out.*] So—I'll make sure of the door.

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE, leaning on MIGNIONET.

Mig. This way, madam, here's more air in this room.

Mrs. Bell. How do you find yourself, ma'am? Pray sit down. [*She sits.*]

Mrs. Love. My spirits are too weak to bear up any longer against such a scene of villainy.

Mrs. Bell. Villainy! What villainy?

Mrs. Love. Of the blackest dye!—I see, madam, you are acquainted with my husband.

Mrs. Bell. Acquainted with your husband!

Mrs. Love. A moment's patience;—that gentleman that was here with you, is my husband! [*Rises.*]

Mrs. Bell. Lord Etheridge your husband?

Mrs. Love. Lord Etheridge, as he calls himself, and

as you have been made to call him also, is no other than Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. And has he then been base enough to assume that title, to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mrs. Love. To see my husband carrying on this dark business,—to see the man I have loved—the man I have esteem'd—the man I am afraid I must still love, though esteem him again I cannot, to be a witness to his complicated wickedness, it was too much for sensibility like mine—I felt the shock too severely, and sunk under it.

Mrs. Bell. I am ready to do the same myself now—I sink into the very ground with amazement. The first time I ever saw him, 'was at Mrs. Loveit's—she introduced him to me; the appointment was of her own making.

Mrs. Love. You know her character, I suppose, madam?

Mrs. Bell. She's a woman of fashion, and sees a great deal of good company.

Mrs. Love. Very capable of such an action for all that.

Mrs. Bell. Well, I could never have imagined that any woman would be so base as to pass such a cheat upon me.—Step this moment and give orders never to let him within my doors again. [*Exit MIGNIONET.*] I am much obliged to you, madam, for this visit;—to me it is highly fortunate, but I am sorry for your share in't, as the discovery brings you nothing but the conviction of your husband's baseness.

Mrs. Love. I am determined to be no further uneasy about him; nor will I live a day longer under his roof.

Mrs. Bell. Hold! hold! make no violent resolutions.—You'll excuse me—I can't help feeling for you, and I think this incident may be still converted to your advantage.

Mrs. Love. That can never be—I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs. Bell. Don't decide that too rashly.—Besides, you have heard his sentiments.—Perhaps you are a little to blame yourself. We will talk this matter over coolly—Ma'am, you have saved me, and I must now discharge the obligation.—You shall stay and dine with me.

Mrs. Love. I can't possibly do that—I won't give you so much trouble.

Mrs. Bell. It will be a pleasure, ma'am—you shall stay with me—I will not part with you; and I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever.—Come, come, my dear madam, don't you still think he has some good qualities to apologize for his vices?

Mrs. Love. I must own, I still hope he has.

Mrs. Bell. Very well then, and he may still make atonement for all;—and, let me tell you, that a man who can make proper atonement for his faults, should not be entirely despised.—Allons—Come, come, a man is worth thinking a little about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Scene I.—Sir Bashful Constant's.

Enter LADY CONSTANT, *with a card*, and FURNISH.

Lady Con. Is the servant waiting?

Fur. He is, madam.

Lady Con. Very well—I need not write—Give my humble service to Mrs. Lovemore, and I shall certainly wait on her.

Fur. I shall, madam. [*Going.*

Lady Con. Has the servant carried back the things to Sir Brilliant Fashion, as I ordered?

Fur. We expect him back every moment, madam.

Lady Con. The insolence of that man, to think he can bribe me with his odious presents!—Very well, go and send my answer to Mrs. Lovemore.—[*Exit FURNISH.*] What can this mean? [*Reads.*

Begs the favour of her ladyship's company to cards this evening.—Cards at Mrs. Lovemore's—there's something new in that.—[*Reads.*] *Hopes her ladyship will not refuse, as it is a very particular affair requires Mrs. Lovemore's friends to be present.*—There is some mystery in all this—What can it be?—

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Here she is—Now let me see whether she will take any notice of the diamond buckles—Your servant, madam.

Lady Con. Your servant, sir.

Sir Bash. You seem out of humour, I think.

Lady Con. And considering that you never give me cause, that's very strange, is it not?

Sir Bash. My Lady Constant, if you did not give me cause—

Lady Con. For heaven's sake, sir, let us have no more disagreeable altercation—I am tired of your violence of temper; your frequent starts of passion, and unaccountable fancies, which you too often mistake for realities.

Sir Bash. Fancies, madam! When do I take fancies for realities?—Do I only fancy that you are eternally making exorbitant demands upon me for money, for the various articles of your expenses? And when you were for ever teasing me for diamonds, and I know not what, was that a fancy I had taken into my head without foundation?

Lady Con. Pray, sir, let us not dispute—I promise you, never to trouble you on that head again.

Sir Bash. She has received them I see, and is ob-

stinately resolved not to tell me. [*Aside.*] Madam, I will not render myself ridiculous in the eyes of the world, for your whims.

Lady Con. Nor will I, sir, be ridiculous any longer on account of your caprice.—I have wrote to my solicitor to attend me here to-morrow morning with the articles of separation ; and I presume, sir, that you can have no objection to their being carried into execution.—I have no time now to squander in frivolous debates, I must prepare to go out.—Your servant, sir. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I must unburden myself at last !—Must disclose the secrets of my heart—She has possessed my very soul ;—is ever present to my imagination ;—mingles with all my thoughts ;—inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here—I cannot any longer keep this fire pent up—I'll throw myself open to her this very moment—Is any body in the way ?

Enter SIDEBBOARD.

Where's your mistress ?

Side. In her own room, sir.

Sir Bash. Draw that table over this way—A letter will do the business—It shall be so.—Reach me a chair.—You blockhead, why don't you reach a chair ?

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter—You shall carry it for me. [*He sits down to write.*]

Side. Yes, sir—I hope he has got some intrigue upon his hands—A servant always thrives under a master that has his private amusements.—Love on, say I, if you are so given ; it will all bring grist to my mill.

Sir Bash. This will be a strange surprise upon my Lady Constant—Soft, passionate, and tender, so far,—and yet it does not come up to what I feel. It is a hard thing, in excessive love like mine, to speak as delicately as we think, to the person that we adore. [*Writes on.*]

Side. Let me see if there is any news in the paper of

to-day. [*Takes a newspaper out of his pocket and reads.*] What in the name of wonder is all this?—O lord! O lord!—I can't help laughing—Ha! ha!—I never heard of the like before—Ha! ha!

Sir Bash. What does this rascal mean? [*Stares at him.*] He does not suspect me, does he?

Side. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. [*Stares still at him.*] Perhaps he overheard my conversation with Mr. Lovemore—Harkye, sirrah! [*Rises.*] if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in the house, I'll cut your ears off, I will.

Side. Sir!—

Sir Bash. Confess the truth;—have not you been listening, and overhearing my conversation?

Side. Who, I sir?—Not I, sir; as I hope to live, sir, I would not be guilty of such a thing, sir, for ever so much—I never did the like in my born days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at, rascal?

Side. An article, sir, I found in the newspaper, that's all, sir—I'll read it to you, sir—— [*Reads.*]

We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal at one of the theatres, and will speedily be performed, entitled, The Amorous Husband; or, the Man in Love with his own Wife.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant told me truth, I see. [*Aside.*] ——Well, and what do you see to laugh at there, sir?

Side. Lord bless me, sir, I never heard of the like before,—I have served in a great many families, and I never heard of such a thing.

Sir Bash. Lookye there now!—[*Aside.*] Sirrah! let me never hear that you have the trick of listening at any of my doors.

Side. No, sir—to be sure, sir—What has he got in his head?

Sir Bash. Wounds! I shall be laugh'd at by my own servants.—But no more scruples—pass that by; it shall

all out—[*Sits down.*] That fellow has so disconcerted me!—There, I have laid my whole heart open to her—I'll seal it directly.—Here, take this, and bring me an answer—And, do you hear?—come hither—mind what I say; take care that nobody sees you.

Side. I warrant, sir.

[*Exit* SIDEBOARD.]

Sir Bash. I feel as if a load was off my breast—and yet I fear—but I'm embark'd, and so I'll wait the event.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. A word or two by way of direction, sir, would not be amiss.

Sir Bash. Blockhead!—Have not I directed it?

[*Takes it back.*]

Side. I could never have suspected him of having an intrigue.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. This rascal does not know the secret of my heart, and he shall remain so—Lovemore shall open the affair to her—I am glad I have not trusted him—should I direct this, the fellow would find me out—You may go about your business, Sideboard—I don't want you.

Side. Very well, sir—what's he at now?—If he does not let me manage his intrigues for him, I'll give him warning.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. Ay, Mr. Lovemore shall do it—the explanation will be more natural and easy from him.—This scoundrel is coming again—no, it is not he.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Ha! Mr. Lovemore!—I am glad to see you!—Mr. Lovemore, you are heartily welcome!

Love. You see me here this second time to-day, Sir Bashful, entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. I thank you, Mr. Lovemore; heartily thank you!

Love. I broke away from company on purpose to attend you—they would have had me stay the evening,

—but I have more pleasure in serving my friends—
Well, how does my lady?

Sir Bash. We don't hit at all, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. No?

Sir Bash. No, no—not at all—I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom, that. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. She still talks of parting; and has even sent to her lawyer about it.—Obstinate as a mule, Mr. Lovemore!—has had the diamond buckles, and sulky still—not one word about them.

Love. Time will bring things about——

Sir Bash. Po! there is not a moment to be lost.—She is set upon it, Mr. Lovemore; and when she sets in she blows like a trade wind, all one way,—and so, to prevent extremities, I have e'en thought of explaining myself to her.

Love. What! acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Yes, and trust to her honour.—I know I could not do it myself in person—I should blush, and look silly, and falter—So I e'en set down to write her a letter—here it is, Mr. Lovemore, signed and sealed—but it is not directed—I got into a puzzle about that—for my servant, you know, would wonder at my writing a letter to her.

Love. So he would.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, he would have smok'd me,—but you are come most opportune—I'll tell you what, you shall direct it and send it to her—Nobody will be a jot the wiser.

Love. Well, I'll take it home with me, and send it to her to-morrow morning.

Sir Eash. No, no; now, directly now.

Love. I'll step to her then and speak for you—Why should you send a letter—If it does not take, she has you in her power—you can't go back—She'll have it under your hand.

Sir Bash. Why, that's true—that's true—And yet if I can obtain a letter from her, I shall have it under her hand.—It must be so—If you go, she'll send a verbal answer by you, and then deny it afterwards.

Love. But I shall be a witness against her.

Sir Bash. That will never do—I shall this way draw her in to write a letter, and then I shall have her bound down.

Love. Better take a little time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No, no, I can't defer it a moment; it burns like a fever here—I must have immediate relief; Mr. Lovemore, you must be my friend—Sit you down, and direct it for me—I'll step and send my servant to carry it for you—Sit down, sit down.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion, sir, is below.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant Fashion!—Rascal! why did you say I was at home?

Side. I had no orders to the contrary, sir.

Love. 'Sdeath, he must not come up—Step to him, Sir Bashful; amuse him, talk to him; tell him the news, any thing, rather than let him come hither to interrupt us.

Sir Bash. No, no, he shan't come up.

Love. By no means; and be sure you don't let him know that I am here—The fellow follows me every where I go. *[Aside.*

Sir Bash. Never fear—He shan't come near you—and in the mean time, be sure you direct the letter.

Love. I will; but you lose time; away; begone! *[Pushes him out.]* A lucky accident this—I have gain'd time by it—what in the name of wonder has he wrote to her?—I am defeated if this preposterous fellow brings things to an explanation—matters were in a fine train, and he himself levelling the road for me; and now, if this takes, I am blown up into the air at once; some

unlucky planet rules to-day.—First the Widow Bellmour—and now this will-o'the-wisp—what can he have wrote to her?—Friendship and wafer, by your leave—but will that be delicate? No—but 'twill be convenient. [*Opens it.*] This letter shall never go—I'll write another myself—a lucky thought!—I absolve my stars—here is every thing ready—[*Sits down.*]—What shall I say?—Any thing will do— [*Reads and writes.*

Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have touched my heart?—Um—loved you long; adored—Um—Um—flatter—Um—Um—Um—happiest of mankind—Um—Um—Um—sweetest revenge—Um—Um—husband—Um—Um—Um—Um—Um—Secret pleasure of rewarding the tenderness of your sincerest admirer,

LOVEMORE.

This will do—Let me seal it, and now direct it.

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Well, well, have you sent it?

Love. No. Your servant has not been with me yet.

Sir Bash. Sideboard! why don't you wait on the gentleman as I order'd?—Sideboard—I have got rid of Sir Brilliant.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, I would not let him come up for the world.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Here, sirrah! Mr. Lovemore wants you.

Love. Master Sideboard, you must step to your lady with this letter.

Sir Bash. Charming! Charming! Ha! ha! [*Aside.*] You must take it up to her directly.

Side. Take it up, sir; my lady's in the next room.

Sir Bash. Is she? then take it in there then to her—make haste—begone!

[*Exit* SIDEBOARD.]

Love. No danger in this, she'll know her own interest, and have prudence to conceal every thing. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. I hope this will succeed, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I hope it will.

Sir Bash. I shall for ever be oblig'd to you—and so will my lady too.

Love. I dare believe she won't prove ungrateful.

Sir Bash. Hush! hush!—I should like to see how she receives it—See, the door is conveniently open. [*Goes on tiptoe to the door.*] Yes, yes, I can see her—there she sits. [*Peeping.*

Love. Methinks, I should like to observe her too.

Sir Bash. Hush—no noise. [*Aside.*

Love. Now, my dear boy, Cupid, incline her heart. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. She has got it! She has got it!—I am frightened out of my wits!

Love. Hold your tongue—She opens it.—My dear Venus, now or never! [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. She colours.

Love. I like that rising blush—A tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale!

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again—In disorder, too—Death and fury, she tears the letter!—I'm undone! [*Walks away from the door.*

Love. She has flung it from her with indignation—I'm undone too! [*Goes from the door.*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you see what it's all come to!

Love. I am sorry to see it come to this, indeed.

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. An absurd, ungrateful woman!

Love. Ungrateful indeed!—To make such a return to so kind a letter.

Sir Bash. Yes, to so kind a letter.

Love. So full of the tenderest protestations.

Sir Bash. You say right—the tenderest protestations!

Love. So generous, so unreserved a declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest openness of heart—throwing one's self at her feet

Love. Very true; throwing one's self at her very feet.

Sir Bash. And then to be spurned, kicked, and treated like a puppy!

Love. Ay, there it stings—to be treated like a puppy!

Sir Bash. I can't bear this!—My dear Mr. Lovemore, do you know in nature a thing so mortifying to the pride of man, as to be rejected and despised by a fine woman?

Love. Oh, 'tis the d—n'dest thing in the world—makes a man look so mean in his own eyes.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I'm heartily obliged to you for taking this affair so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of, I assure you.

Sir Bash. You are very kind indeed—This is enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

[Both speak these broken sentences in a kind of reverie.]

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, Sir Bashful! I forgot to tell you the highest thing—Hey! what's the matter here?

Love. 'Sdeath! what brings him here again? [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. You seem both out of humour.

Sir Bash. The blockheads of servants to let him in!

[Aside.]

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, but this is very odd!—Perhaps Lovemore is borrowing money of you, Sir Bashful, and you can't agree about the premium?

Sir Bash. Pressing business, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Po! po!—he's a very honest fellow; let him have the money—By the way, Lovemore, I have a crow to pluck with you.

Love. Well, well, another time.—He haunts me up and down like my evil genius! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Well, but you both look very grave upon it.—As you will;—you have not the same reason to be in harmony with yourselves as I have——Here, here!—I came back on purpose to tell you—[*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See here, my boys! See what a present has been made me!—A magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by Jupiter!

Love. How!

Sir Bash. A pair of diamond buckles!

Sir Bril. A pair of diamond buckles, sir:—How such a thing should be sent to me, I can't conceive—but so it is—The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and being attentive to the service of the ladies.

Sir Bash. And this was sent you as a present?

Sir Bril. Ay, as a present.—Do you envy me?

Sir Bash. I can't say but I do——My buckles, Mr. Lovemore, by all that's false in woman.

[*Aside to LOVEMORE.*

Love. Ay, he's the happy man, I see. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Both burning with envy, by Jupiter!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady, that imagines you sent them to her, and so she chooses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. No, no—no such thing!—Had I presented the buckles, they would never have been returned.—Ladies don't reject presents, my dear Sir Bashful, from the man that is agreeable in their eyes.

Sir Bash. So I believe——What a jade it is! [*Aside.*

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. No, no, had I sent them to a lady, take my word for it, they would have been very acceptable.

Sir Bash. So I suppose——I make no doubt but she'll give him my three hundred pounds too! [*Aside.*

Love. That he should be my rival, and overtop me thus! [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. And pray now, Sir Brilliant—I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. This is the forerunner of it, I think.—Ha! ha! Sir Bashful!—Mr. Lovemore, this it is to be in luck!—Ha! ha! ha! [*Laughs at both.*

Sir Bash. } Ha! ha!
Love. . } [*Forcing a laugh.*

Sir Bash. Very well, my Lady Constant!—very well, madam—very well! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. I swear you both are strangely piqued at my success—Sir Bashful, observe how uneasy Lovemore looks.

Love. You wrong me, sir;—I—I—I—I am not uneasy.

Sir Bash. He's a true friend—He's uneasy on my account. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, but you are uneasy!—and, my dear Sir Bashful, you repine at my success.

Sir Eash. Yes, sir, I do—I own it.

Sir Bril. Well, you're not disposed to be good company—I'll leave you.—Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. I can't say, sir;—I believe I shall stay here.

Sir Bril. Nay, nay, if you are so snappish—I am glad to hear that, I am engaged to his wife. [*Aside.*] Is it not a rare present, Sir Bashful? [*Pulling him by the sleeve.*] Thou dear pledge of love, let me lay thee close to my heart.

[*Exit SIR BRILLIANT, looking at the case.*]

Sir Bash. What think ye now, Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable to me, sir.

Sir Bash. Unaccountable!—'Tis too plain—my wife's a jade—a prostitute—a courtesan!

Love. I'm glad she has tore my letter, however.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I'm gulled, cheated, imposed upon, deceived, and dubbed—Ay, here her ladyship comes—And now she shall hear her own.

Love. 'Sdeath! let me fly the approaching storm—
Sir Bashful, your humble servant, sir—I wish you a good night. [Going.

Sir Bash. You must not go—you shan't leave me in this exigence—you shall be a witness of our separation.

Love. No, I can't bear the sight of her after what has pass'd—Good night—[*SIR BASHFUL holds him.*] D—nation! I must weather it! [Aside.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

Lady Con. I am surprised, Mr. Lovemore, that you will offer to stay a moment longer in this house.

Love. How the devil shall I give a turn to this affair? [Aside.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore is my friend, madam; and I desire he'll stay here as long as he pleases, madam.

Love. All must come out. [Aside.

Lady Con. Your friend, Sir Bashful!—And do you authorize him to make sport of me, sir?—I wonder, Mr. Lovemore, you would think of sending me such a letter!—Do you presume, sir, upon my having admitted a trifling act of civility from you?—Do you come disguised, sir, under a mask of friendship to undo me?

Love. It's a coming. [Aside.

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship!—I know Mr. Lovemore too well, and I desired him to send that letter.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, madam.

Sir Bash. I desired him, madam.

Love. He desired me, madam.

Lady Con. What, to affront me, sir?

Sir Bash. There was not one word of truth in it.

Love. Not one word of truth, madam.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam; merely to know you a little or so.

Love. Merely to know you! pure innocent mirth.

Lady Con. And am I to be treated thus, sir; to be ever tormented by you?—And could you, Mr. Lovemore, be so unmanly as to make yourself an accomplice in so mean an attempt to ensnare me?

Sir Bash. To ensnare me!—She calls it ensnaring—It is pretty plain from all that has pass'd between us that our tempers are not fit for one another; and I now tell you that I am ready to part as soon as you please. Nay I will part.

Lady Con. That is the only thing we can agree in, sir.

Sir Bash. Had that letter come from another quarter, I know it would have been highly acceptable.

Lady Con. I disdain the imputation!

Sir Bash. I will vent no more reproaches—This is the last of our conversing together—And take this with you, by the way, you are not to believe one word of that letter—And as to any passion, that any body declares for you, there was no such thing—was there, Lovemore? [Goes over to him.]

Love. He states it all very right, madam.

Sir Bash. Let us laugh at her, Lovemore. Ha! ha! ha!

Love. Silly devil!—I can't help laughing at him. [Aside.] Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. Ha! ha! ha!—all a bam, madam!—ha! ha! nothing else in the world!—all to make sport of you. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Con. I cannot bear this usage any longer—Two such brutes!—Is my chair ready there?—You may depend, sir, this is the last you will see of me in your house. [Exit LADY CONSTANT.]

Sir Bash. A bargain, madam, with all my heart!—Ha! ha! Lovemore, this was well managed.

Love. Charminglly managed, indeed!—I did not think you had so much spirit in you.

Sir Bash. I have found her out—I know her at last.—But, Mr. Lovemore, never own the letter; deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon me.

Sir Bash. I return you a thousand thanks.—A foolish woman, how she stands in her own light!

Love. Truly, I think she does.—Sir Bashful, I am mighty sorry I could not succeed better in this affair.

Sir Bash. And so am I.

Love. I have done my best, you see—and now I'll take my leave.

Sir Bash. Nay, stay a little longer.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not care how long I staid—but as things are situated, your humble servant, Sir Bashful.—Well off this bout—well off!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, your servant; a good night to you.—But harkye, Mr. Lovemore; if I can serve you with your lady——

Love. I thank you as much as if you did.

Sir Bash. Be sure you deny every thing.—Fare you well.—[*Exit LOVEMORE.*] Sideboard, see the gentleman ont.—He is a true friend indeed! I should have been undone but for him.—My Lady Constant! My Lady Constant!—Let me drive her from my thoughts.—Can I do it?—Rage, fury, love,—think no more of love—I never will own a tittle of that letter.—Odso! yonder it lies in fragments upon the ground—I'll pick them up this moment—keep them safe in my own custody—And, as to Sir Brilliant, I shall know how to proceed with madam in regard to him—I'll watch them both—if I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt—If I can but get the means in my power, to prove to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall be happy.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

Scene I.—An Apartment at Mr. Lovemore's.

Enter Mrs. Lovemore, elegantly dressed, Muslin following her.

Mus. Why to be sure, ma'am; it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs. Love. I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct, and I am determined never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why, that's the very thing, ma'am; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company? Ma'am, take your share of pleasure, and never break your heart for any man. This is what I always said.

Mrs. Love. It's very well, you need not say any more now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody murdering brute.

Mrs. Love. No more of these liberties, I desire.

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But dear heart, how every body will be overjoy'd, when they find you have pluck'd up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketing at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits.—Lard, this is another thing, and you look quite like another thing, ma'am, and that dress quite becomes you.—I suppose, ma'am, you will never wear your negligée again? It is not fit for you, indeed, ma'am.—It might pass very well with some folks, ma'am, but the like of you——

Mrs. Love. Pr'ythee truce with your tongue, and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter MRS. BELLMOUR.

Mrs. Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step down stairs, and do as I have ordered you.

Mus. What the deuce can she be at now? [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bell. You see I am punctual to my time.—Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs. Love. I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs. Bell. Be ruled by me, have courage, courage, and I'll answer for the event. Why, really, now you look just as you should do.—Why should you neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs. Love. You are so civil, *Mrs. Bellmour.*

Mrs. Bell. And so true too—What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole by those graces of the mind, which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders, and even upon the depraved mind of *Mr. Lovemore.*—You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs. Love. No—not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. Bell. If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. Well, and have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs. Love. Pretty well.

Mrs. Bell. That's right: show him that you will consult your own pleasure.—Is *Sir Brilliant* of the party?

Mrs. Love. Apropos, as soon as I came home I received a letter from him; he there urges his addresses with great warmth, begs to see me again, and has something particular to tell me—you shall see it.—O lud, I have not it about me!—I left it in my dressing-room

I believe; you shall see it by and by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. That lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs. Bell. Well! two such friends as Sir Brilliant and Mr. Lovemore, I believe, never existed!

Mrs. Love. Their falsehood to each other is unparalleled. I left Sir Brilliant at the whist table: as soon as the rubber is out, he'll certainly quit his company in pursuit of me. Apropos—my Lady Constant is here.

Mrs. Bell. Is she?

Mrs. Love. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr. Lovemore has had a design there too.

Mrs. Bell. Lud a mercy! what would have become of the poor man, if he had succeeded with us all.

Mrs. Love. [*A rap at the door.*] As I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. If it is, every thing goes on swimmingly within.

Mrs. Love. I hear his voice; it is he! How my heart beats!

Mrs. Bell. Courage, and the day's your own. Where must I run?

Mrs. Love. In there, ma'am. Make haste; I hear his step on the stair-head.

Mrs. Bell. Success attend you. I am gone. [*Erit.*]

Mrs. Love. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mr. Lovemore, you are welcome home.

Love. Mrs. Lovemore, your servant.

[*Without looking at her.*]

Mrs. Love. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I would come home, did not I? I always

like to be as good as my word.—What could she mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*

Love. She does not mean to do so infamous a thing as to jilt me? [*Aside.*] O lord! I am wonderfully tired.
[*Yawns and sinks into an arm chair.*]

Mrs. Love. You an't indisposed, I hope, my dear?

Love. No, my dear; I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones all the way from the city. I drank coffee with the old banker. I have been there ever since I saw you.—Confoundedly tired.—Where's William?

Mrs. Love. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*

Mrs. Love. You never are in spirits at home, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon: I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home,—very, [*yawns*] very happy!

Mrs. Love. I can hear otherwise. I am informed, that Mr. Lovemore is the inspirer of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. O! you overrate me; upon my soul you do.

Mrs. Love. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that 'tis your wit that inspirits every thing; that you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. No! no! [*laughing*] how can you talk so? I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! How can you banter so?—I divide my favours too!—O, heavens! I can't stand this raillery: such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive!

I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit.—
O lord! O lord! [Laughs.]

Mrs. Love. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference.

[Walks across the stage.]

Love. *[Rises and walks the contrary way.]* I can't put this Widow Bellmour out of my head. *[Aside.]*

Mrs. Love. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold insolent contempt— *[Walking.]*

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied.

[Aside.]

[They walk for some time silently by each other.]

Mrs. Love. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string?—but pr'ythee don't set me a laughing again.—Offence!—nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—*[Yawns and walks.]*—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife;—prudent, managing,—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine;—not much addicted to pleasure,—grave, retired, and domestic; govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, *[yawns]* scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife *[yawns]* as a body might wish to have.—Where's William?—I must go to bed.

Mrs. Love. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I shan't go out to-night.

Mrs. Love. But I mean the company in the drawing-room.

Love. What company?

[Stares at her.]

Mrs. Love. That I invited to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out too!—What is all this?

Mrs. Love. You have no objection, I hope.

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

Mrs. Love. You know them all; and there's your friend Sir Brilliant there.

Love. Is he there? I'm glad of it. But, pray now, how comes this about?

Mrs. Love. I intend to do it often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs. Love. Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so, do so, ma'am: the change in your temper will be very pleasing.

Mrs. Love. I shall, indeed, sir. I'm in earnest.

Love. By all means follow your own inclinations.

Mrs. Love. And so I shall, sir, I assure you. [*Sings.*

Love. What the devil is the matter with her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs. Love. Mean, sir!—It means—it means—it means—it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, pleasure, and enjoyment?

Love. She is mad!—Stark mad!

Mrs. Love. You're mistaken, sir,—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. No offence, I hope—Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the unpolitest thing; for a married couple to interfere and encroach on each other's pleasures! O hideous! it would be gothic to the last degree. Ha! ha! ha!

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha! ha!—Ma'am, you—ha! ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs. Love. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now, I

positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am, I don't rightly comprehend——

Mrs. Love. Oh lud! oh lud!—with that important face! Well, but come, now; what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs. Love. Oh, are you there, sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr. Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, is a little alarming, and——

Mrs. Love. Nay, don't be frightened; there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope? Never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should in her turn make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point——

Love. Madam!

[*Angrily.*

Mrs. Love. Well, well, don't be frightened. I say, I sh'n't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there, you may depend upon it.—You won't come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like.—Well, you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us?—Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material where a body eats:—the company expects me—Your servant, Mr. Lovemore, yours, yours.

[*Exit, singing.*

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me,—Your servant, my dear!—yours, yours! [*Mimicking her.*] What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. Zounds, I must begin to look a little sharp after the lady. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to—— [*Going.*]

Enter MUSLIN in a hurry.

Mus. Madam, madam,—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master——

Love. What, is she mad too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir,—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady, that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir! Let me see it.

Mus. Lard, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir, a letter from the country—a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de fize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it. Give it me this moment.

[*Reads.*] *To Mrs. Lovemore!—Brilliant Fashion,*
This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir,—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll show you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it?—Tell me truth——

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [Exit.]

Love. A pretty epistle truly this seems to be—Let me read it. [Reads.]

Permit me, dear madam, to throw myself on my knees, for on my knees I must address you, and in that humble posture, to implore your compassion.——Compassion with a vengeance on him——Think you see me now with tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at your feet.——Very well, sir.——Can you find it in your heart to persist in cruelty?——Grant me but access to you once more, and in addition to what I already said this morning I will urge such motives——Urge motives, will ye?——as will suggest to you, that you should no longer hesitate in gratitude to reward him, who still on his knees, here makes a vow to you of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.

So! so! so! your very humble servant, Sir Brilliant Fashion!——This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind, indeed, sir,—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and Mrs. Lovemore, I'm your humble servant too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and Sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside; and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. At least I'll try. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [Exit.]

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE and SIR BRILLIANT.

Mrs. Love. I tell you, Sir Brilliant, your civility is odious, your compliments fulsome, and your sollicita-

tions impertinent, sir.—I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it, and I can't refrain.

Sir Bril. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs. Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs. Love. No danger of that, sir: don't be so solicitous about me. Why would you leave the company? Let me entreat you to return, sir.

Sir Bril. By heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, languid, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstasy and bliss.

Mrs. Love. I desire, Sir Brilliant, you will desist from this unequalled insolence. I am not to be treated in this manner;—and I assure you, sir, that were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr. Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband then!—A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint. She yields, by all that's wicked; what shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense?
[*Aside.*

Go, my heart's envoys, tender sighs, make haste,—
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,—
Raptures and paradise—
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd.

[*Forcing her all this time.*

Enter MR. LOVEMORE.

Love. Zoons! this is too much.

Sir Bril. [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This con-

founded buckle is always plaguing me. My dear boy, Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee.

[*They stand looking at each other.*]

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Bril. I was telling your lady, here, of the most whimsical adventure——

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Bril. Ay, 'tis all over, I am detected! [*Aside.*] Mr. Lovemore, if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

Love. No, sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady and this roof protect you.

Sir Bril. But, Mr. Lovemore——

Love. But, sir,——

Sir Bril. I only beg——

Love. Pray, sir,—Sir I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Bril. I declare, upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, Sir Brilliant, don't mention the word.

Sir Bril. If begging pardon of that lady——

Love. That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady.

Sir Bril. Nay, but pr'ythee, Lovemore——

Love. Po! Po! don't tell me, sir——

[*Walks about in anger.*]

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, Sir Bashful. [*Gives him SIR BRILLIANT'S letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause—— [*SIR BASHFUL reads to himself.*]

Sir Bril. Hear but what I have to say——

Love. No, sir, no; I have done with you for the present.—As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct—I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word, Mr. Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. Sir!—It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of!

Sir Bash. Why, so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*Aside.*] here, take this letter, and read it to him; his own letter to my wife.

Sir Bril. Let me have it. [*Takes the letter.*]

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the worst thing a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. 'Tis an unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Bril. Well, I can't see any thing unparalleled in it: I believe it will not be found to be without a precedent—as for example—— [*Reads.*]

To my LADY CONSTANT——

Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have touched my heart?

Love. Zoons! my letter—— [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. [*Reading.*] *I long have loved you, long adored. Could I but flatter myself——*

Sir Bash. The basest thing a man can be guilty of, Mr. Lovemore!

Love. All a forgery, sir: all a forgery.

[*Snatches the letter.*]

Sir Bash. That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation.—My Lady Constant, how have I wronged you!—That was

the cause of your taking it so much to heart, Mr. Lovemore, was it?

Love. A mere contrivance to palliate his guilt. Po! Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. [*Opens the door.*] Hell and destruction!—what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house.

[*Runs to the opposite door.*]

Mrs. Love. I'll secure this door; you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, let me pass!

Mrs. Love. Nay, you shall stay: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam——

Enter MRS. BELLMOUR.

Mrs. Bell. My lord, my Lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship. [*Taking hold of him.*]

Mrs. Love. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter——

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Love. Mrs. Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr. Lovemore to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Mrs. Bell. No, my dear ma'am, let me introduce Lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My lord——

Sir Bril. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. Wounds! is this another of his intrigues blown up?

Mrs. Love. My dear ma'am, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs. Bell. Pardon me, ma'am, 'tis my Lord Etheridge.

Mrs. Love. My dear, how can you be so ill-bred

in, your father's friend, and your father's friend
Lansdowne.

—call up the most of your father's friends.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
ridge, a lover of mine, who has been your
marriage to me. I should have thought that
I will take your father's friend's name.

[Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.]

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of
and ribband? And to the gay, the Lord, the
Lord Etheridge dwindles down to a mere
man, the subject of a mere. I should have
obedient, very humble, very obedient. I should
to Lord Etheridge's friends. I should have
situation.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
has he?

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
Lansdowne's friends. I should have thought
honourable designs.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
situation, of his friends. I should have
dejected spirit.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
acknowledge the provisions of the law.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
situation, of his friends. I should have
dejected spirit.

Mrs. Bell. I should have thought that your
father's friends would have been your friends.
situation, of his friends. I should have
dejected spirit.

Love. Now he comes upon me.—O! I'm in a fine situation! *[Aside.*

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd, and ridiculous! *[Aside.*

Sir Bril. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord.

Love. D—nation! I can't bear all this—I won't stay to be teased by any of you—I'll go to the company in the card room. *[Goes to the door in the back scene.]*—Here is another fiend! I am beset with them.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

No way for an escape?—

[Attempts both stage doors, and is prevented.]

Lady Con. I have lost every rubber I play'd for—quite broke; do, Mr. Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give a hundred you were all in Nova Scotia.

Lady Con. Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs. Love. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

Mrs. Bell. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain, I think, now, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha! ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon Sir Bashful, for all this—*[Takes SIR BASHFUL's letter out of his pocket.]*—where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?—Ha! ha! ha!

Love. *[Reads.]* I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold—

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone.

[*Aside.*

Love. Hear this, Sir Bashful—I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold the manifold vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I am myself the occasion.

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the letter.*

Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed.

Lady Con. For heaven's sake let us see—It is his hand, sure enough.

Love. Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments.

Sir Bash. I can't look any body in the face.

All. Ha! ha!——

Sir Bril. So, so, so! he has been in love with his wife all this time, has he! Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me? Lovemore, pray now don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we are both villains.

Sir Bril. Villains!

Love. Ay, both! we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs. Bell. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam, and am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With sincere remorse I ask your pardon.—I should ask pardon of my Lady Constant too, but the truth is, Sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and when a husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised, if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does in some sort apologize for him.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! Sir Bashful! thou art ruined!
[*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms!—what terms?

Mrs. Bell. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady.
[*Pointing to Mrs. Lovemore.*

Love. That lady, ma'am!—That lady has no reason to complain

Mrs. Love. No reason to complain, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs. Love. In my conduct, sir!

Love. In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above palliating the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs. Love. There, I confess, he touches me. [*Aside.*

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety, to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal tete-a-tete; and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is—— [*Laughing.*

Mrs. Love. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come, you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive,

Mrs. Love. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know, that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours——

Mrs. Bell. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, kiss and be friends. There, Mrs. Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs. Love. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match with all my heart. I shall hereafter be ashamed only of my follies, but never shall be ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Shan't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all, from the bottom of my heart. My Lady Constant, I own the letter, I own the sentiments of it; [*Embraces her.*] and from this moment I take you to my heart.—Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me!

Sir Bril. And now, Mr. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands?

[*Points to MRS. LOVEMORE.*

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad dogs we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other d—nably—for the future we will endeavour to make each other amends.

Sir Bril. And so we will.

Love. And now I heartily congratulate the whole company that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs. Bell. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear ma'am, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and reports well of himself.

Mrs. Bell. The reproof is just, I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, let us keep the secret.

Love. What, returning to your fears again?

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. Though, faith, if this business were known in the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend: the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites, they should not suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the Graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,
THE WAY TO KEEP HIM is a task indeed.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END.

THE
FUGITIVE;

A COMEDY.

BY
JOSEPH RICHARDSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD DARTFORD.
SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE.
MR. WINGROVE.
OLD MANLY.

JENKINS.
LARRON.
O'DONNELL.
WILLIAM.
SERVANT.

MRS. MANLY.
MISS HERBERT.
MISS JULIA WINGROVE.
MISS MANLY.
MRS. LARRON.
MRS. RACHEL CLEVELAND.

THE FUGITIVE.

ACT I.

Scene I.—An Apartment in Sir William Wingrove's House.

Enter SIR WILLIAM and MISS JULIA WINGROVE.

Julia. Let me entreat you, sir, to hear me—let reason be my advocate.

Sir Will. Reason, Julia!—You know 'tis my delight, my glory. What constitutes the pre-eminence of man, but his reason? 'Tis, like the sacred virtue of high blood, a natural exaltation, of which we can never lose the advantage, but by voluntary degradation, or perverse misuse—What but reason is the foundation of my preference for Lord Dartford?—Is he not of a family as ancient even as my own?

Julia. Did Lord Dartford inherit any of the virtues, which, probably, acquired those highly valued honours of his ancestry, my father might have some cause to regret that his daughter's inclinations were at enmity with her duty.

Sir Will. And where, madam, have you learnt, that the splendour of Lord Dartford's family suffers any diminution in his own person?

Julia. Where some of the happiest years of my life have been passed, sir, at my dear deceased aunt's.

Sir Will. Mr. Manly, now, I dare say, had not the least share in producing this aversion to Lord Dartford.

Julia. Mr. Manly, sir!—Mr. Manly wou'd scorn—nor can it ever be necessary for him to raise his own character by a useless degradation of Lord Dartford.

Sir Will. Aye, aye, now we have it—I thought what share the eloquence of your aunt had had in this apostasy from the faith of your ancestors—Mr. Manly, it seems, has contrived to make so successful a monopoly of all the virtues, that there does not remain even the leavings of an accomplishment for any other person.—But since I despair of making *you* enter into the just views of your family, by dutifully consenting, as you ought, to marry a man for the revered merit of his blood, your brother shall try, whether your young spark be not composed of more practicable materials.

Julia. For heaven's sake, dear sir, forego this—What must be the consequence of their meeting?

Sir Will. If you have any objection to the interview, you know how to prevent it.

Julia. Oh, sir, do not force me to so dreadful an alternative. I will, if you require it, bind myself by the most solemn engagements to give up all thoughts of Mr. Manly, only let me no more be persecuted with the addresses of Lord Dartford.

Sir Will. Nay, now I must believe you; for where has it been recorded that an enamoured damsel ever broke a promise to an old father, when given at the expense of a young lover?—For once, however, you must excuse me, if I am a little disobedient to the authority of precedent, and endeavour to find some better security for the honour of my family, even than your lovesick renunciation of the object of your affections.

Julia. Yet, sir, hear me.

Sir Will. I do hear you—But first tell me why have I preserved you, since the decease of your aunt, from all intercourse with the world, with the single exception of the friendship of Miss Herbert, whose approaching

alliance with your brother gives her a common interest in the lustre of our house?—Why have I, like a fond parent, forbid you society?—kept you sacred from the arts of our sex, and the more dangerous follies of your own?—lock'd you up and guarded you, like the archives of my own family, that you might increase in value, as you advanced in years?—Why? but to secure you from the contagion of a degenerate world—who feel more anxiety about the means of supporting new families, than awful reverence for the names of old ones, and would meanly thrive by plebeian industry, rather than diet on the rich recollection of their immortal ancestry.

Julia. But my dear father, just now, kindly condescended to say he would suffer me to reason with him on this subject. Can birth, alone, entitle a man to the high distinction you speak of?—And surely Lord Dartford——

Sir Will. Grant me patience, heaven! Do you call in question the prudence of my choice? Ungrateful Julia, never more will I hear you on this subject—and now attend my final determination—To-morrow you marry Lord Dartford.

Julia. To-morrow, sir!—You will not——

Sir Will. Positively to-morrow—neither remonstrances, nor tears, shall sway me from my determin'd purpose. I leave you now to your reflections, and go to adjust the necessary preliminaries of a ceremony, that will recal you, inconsiderate girl, to duty and to reason.

[*Exit.*

Julia. Is it possible!—Can my father thus shut his heart to the distresses of his Julia?—My brother too, happy in his own affections, not only abandons me to the interested rigour of his cruel ambition, but assists and animates him in the prosecution of his views.—Wretched, friendless Julia! whither wilt thou turn?—Ah, Manly, that amidst the various excellencies of thy heart there is yet a careless generosity in thy nature

—an irregular, though not ungraceful, excess in thy very virtues, which, though it neither forbids esteem, nor damps affection, yet gives the alarm to delicacy, and checks the full pleasure of a fearless, unsuspecting confidence—were it not for this, I think I could not deny myself with thee a willing asylum from the severities of this domestic persecution. [Exit.

Scene II.—Sir William's Garden.

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Y. Man. Thus far I have achiev'd my purpose without discovery—what a devil of a wall have I had to scramble up to obtain even the chance of an interview—The sulky grandeur of your ancient battlements was always the difficulty and the glory of an enamour'd hero—But what can the maddest of the most venerable lads of chivalry lay claim to, that does not to the full as reasonably belong to me? I have all their hopes with all their apprehensions—all their fears with all their confidence—all their weakness with all their fortitude—So I think it cannot be denied but that I possess as many good sound contradictions in my character as the best of them—I have not indeed the gift of waiting that those gentlemen had, for I begin already to feel impatient at Julia's delay. Would I could gain but a distant glimpse of her, or hear one strain of her enchanting voice—dear melodious voice! soft as a lover's sigh embodied into music, and sweet as the inspired eloquence of a consenting smile—But soft! soft! she approaches, and in tears! let me endeavour to learn the cause of them, before I make my appearance; what must he be composed of, and what does he not deserve, who has been profane enough to excite them!

[Retires behind a tree.

Enter JULIA, and seats herself in an alcove.

Julia. Here let me rest awhile, and endeavour to collect my scattered thoughts. Could it be believed that my father, strict as his general notions of honour are, should think of forcing me to become the wife of a man whom my soul abhors!

Y. Man. Forcing thee!

Julia. When, too, he is convinc'd of my being attach'd to another.

Y. Man. To another!

Julia. I think he loves me.

Y. Man. I am sure he does—that is, if I am he.

Julia. He is kind and generous, capable of the most ardent and disinterested passion.

Y. Man. It must be me.

Julia. But he has faults, great faults.

Y. Man. Now I am sure 'tis me.

Julia. I dread the levity of his nature—Oh, Manly, Manly! why cannot I trust thee?

Y. Man. I am sure I can't tell.

Julia. How gladly cou'd I owe the relief of my present afflictions to thy kindness, but for the dread of being afterwards exposed to the severer calamity of thy indifference! Oh why, why, Manly, cannot I confide in thee?

Y. Man. [*Comes forward.*] Why indeed! Dear generous Julia, banish these apprehensions, I never can injure truth, innocence, and beauty like thine.

Julia. Mr. Manly! How you have alarmed me! What a rash step is this—But fly, I conjure you; if you have any regard for my happiness—fly.

Y. Man. Fly, Julia? Yes, swifter than a lover's thought; but you must be the partner of my flight.

Julia. You cannot surely be serious.

Y. Man. So serious that I shall not stir one single step without you—Julia, Julia, this is no time for trifling or for ceremony. To be candid with you, I have over-

heard you, and if I deserve punishment for the involuntary offence, reserve it till the danger is over that threatens you.

Julia. Indeed, Mr. Manly, your generous concern for me leaves me as little right, as I have inclination to be severe, but therefore it is I intreat you to quit this scene of danger—You know the fury of my relations.

Y. Man. Nay, Julia, I care not how soon I go—As we depart together you cannot reasonably suspect me of being an advocate for delay.

Julia. What can you mean?

Y. Man. Mean!—Why to decide my fate on the instant—Either to follow you as your humble slave through the wide world of happiness, for it can have no place in it forbidden to delight while you are with me, or meet with resignation, on the spot, the bitterest resentment of your vindictive family.

Julia. Oh! Manly, give me not such a fatal proof of your affection—I will consider of your proposal by to-morrow—but go now, I beseech you.

Y. Man. Not a step—If I am stubborn, Julia, you are my example. I have not often such authority for my conduct—I will not quit you till I am assured of your deliverance from this unnatural tyranny.

Julia. Hear me for a moment—I do not wish to conceal from you how much my gratitude is interested in your safety—The embarrassment of my present situation, added to this dangerous evidence of your attachment, will, I hope, in some measure, excuse me for the confession I am about to—But, indeed, sir, indeed—what shall I say? A womanish apprehension prevails over my tongue, and sways it from the direction of my heart, in spite of me—Indeed, I cannot go with you—Character, prudence, duty forbid it.

Y. Man. I confess, madam, I was prepared to expect more candour and more decision from the lips of Miss Wingrove.

Julia. Dear Manly, I thank you for this rebuke—it brings me back to myself—something must be allowed to the fond agitation of a woman's fears—but they are gone; Love himself, unfriendly as he is to truth, yet smiles propitiously upon a slow obedience to it at last.—Meet me at one, in the avenue before our house, and then with more safety to my Henry, as well as more security to our enterprise, I will resign myself and all my hopes to your faithful guidance.

Y. Man. Dearest Julia, on my knees I thank you—I am oppressed at once with love and gratitude—It is needless to say with what anxious vigilant punctuality I will obey your mandate—with what idolatry of submissive affection, I will watch over every rising thought, and half-formed object of your future life. [*Rises.*] From this moment, then, dismiss all apprehension of your Henry's levity, and be satisfied that——

Julia. I am satisfied—Surely, I have proved I am so—But interesting as your conversation always is, and on this theme fraught with peculiar endearment, I must deprive myself of it—You must go—pray obey me now—My turn for obedience approaches fast. Remember.

Y. Man. Can I forget the consecrated moment! Adieu, ever dearest, till then.

Julia. Adieu, dear Manly.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—Lord Dartford's House.

Enter LORD DARTFORD, followed by JENKINS.

Lord D. Jenkins, does Sir William know of my arrival here?

Jen. He does, my lord.

Lord D. Well, I suppose I must pay the first visit—But hold, should not I brush up my style a little, to

enable me to undergo this encounter of genealogy? No—I believe there is no occasion; the secret lies in a short compass—Pedigree's the word—and one of your real accurate lovers of historical virtù—will believe any thing—And so, we'll trust to chance and the assistance of such convenient absurdities as may happen to arise [*A knocking at the door.*—But see who's there, Jenkins.

[JENKINS goes, and introduces SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE.

Sir Will. I hope, my lord, my presence, thus unannounced, does not interrupt any of your lordship's weightier concerns.

Lord D. It is impossible that the favour of Sir William Wingrove's company can ever be felt as an intrusion.

Sir Will. Your lordship is kindness itself—[*They sit down.*] It is a doubtful point with me, my lord, in the alliance which is upon the eve of accomplishment, by which party the honour will be given or received.

Lord D. So he's off already—there's but one way for me—I should ill deserve my good fortune, Sir William, were I not sensible that the honour and the happiness are both eminently mine.

Sir Will. Why, my lord, that is by no means a clear case—I perceive that your lordship possesses a very competent knowledge of the antiquity of our family; but to deal candidly with you, I believe yours takes its rise nearly about the same time—pretty nearly; that is to say—I mean within a century of us, or some such trifle—I dare say it does; for the Dartford family may be very clearly traced to the conquest.

Lord D. The conquest, Sir William, is modern—It is not long since I perused a valuable manuscript, that makes very honourable mention of the Wingroves, in one of the remoter reigns of the Saxon Heptarchy.

Sir Will. Could your lordship procure me a sight of that manuscript? The favour will be infinite.

Lord D. Sir William may rely upon it, that if my friend can be prevailed upon to resign the parchment, I shall be happy in promoting his wish. [*Aside.*] And if he does, his politeness must positively be of a most accommodating cast, to enable him to part with what he never had.

Sir Will. In one of the remoter reigns of the Saxon Heptarchy! Is it possible! But why not possible?—To what times may not the family of the Wingroves be traced by the laudable diligence of learned inquiry? Even up to the dark periods of early nature, of rudeness, ignorance, and barbarity, where Knowledge fails us, and History herself is lost in the confusion of her materials. [*Muses.*]

Lord D. Now will he not be content till he has pursued his high birth to the illustrious parentage of a savage, and drawn the boasted stream of his pure blood from the polluted leavings of the deluge.

Sir Will. Now, my lord, to business—The fifty thousand pounds which I purpose as my daughter's dower, is but a small, and indeed inadequate, compensation for the honour of your dignified alliance—Happy, but too happy, should we all feel ourselves, if her inclinations accorded with our wishes, and acquiesced in the brilliant provision we have made for her—But she is perverse, my lord, unaccountably perverse—Yet submit she shall, and that without delay—I am fixed, immutably fixed—But if your lordship will do me the honour to accompany me to my house, I will there explain to your lordship the difficulties we have to encounter, and the expedients we have provided to overcome them—Nay, my lord—— [*Contending on the etiquette of precedence.*]

Lord D. Impossible, Sir William! mere title is adventitious; birth inherent. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.—The Road, with a distant View of Sir William Wingrove's House.

Enter YOUNG MANLY, singing.

Y. Man. Was there ever such a happy, unlucky dog as myself—happy beyond the narrow bounds of mortal imagination in the love of my Julia—but horribly unlucky, that the certainty and near approach of my felicity has quite bereft me of my senses.—Just as I had abandoned myself to despair, to be raised in one delicious half-hour to the summit of—Oh! egad there's no bearing it! I shall run mad—I am mad, that's certain.
[Sings and dances.

Enter ADMIRAL CLEVELAND.

Admiral. So, so—there's young Frolicsome in his whirligigs—What, 'Squire Madcap, are you practising 'how to make a fool of yourself?—Don't take so much trouble, young man; you can succeed pretty well without so much pains.

Y. Man. Ha! my old man of war—give me your hand—When shall you and I go upon a voyage to the——

Adm. To the moon, eh! young Freshwater? Why, you seem to be in her latitude already; or have you been stowing in a fresh lading of champaign?

Y. Man. Your first conjecture is perhaps a little near the mark; for my understanding, I believe, is rather upon the go; but as for champaign—curse champaign.

Adm. What then you have been in a tight engagement at play, and have brought the enemy to——A'nt that it, my young shark?

Y. Man. No, no, my heart of oak; I defy the power of gold to disorder my senses—But, what do you think, my noble commander, of gaining the woman one loves?

Can your old weather-beaten fancy conceive any joy equal to that?

Adm. Why, I don't think I can; unless it be seeing an enemy's ship strike; and that does give the senses a whirl that none but a seaman can be a judge of.

Y. Man. Why then, as I am a stranger to naval sensations, the pleasure of being beloved by an angel, must serve *my* turn.—When conquer'd beauty prepares to yield—when willing love strikes the flag—that's the whirl for my money.

Adm. Well, that's good-natured, however, to rejoice at the thoughts of an engagement, where you are sure to have the worst on't.

Y. Man. Dear admiral, had I but known you when I was a boy!

Adm. What then?

Y. Man. Then? Do you ask me what then? Oh, Julia!

“ My soul hath her consent so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.”

Adm. Poor young man!—Well, my lad, when your wits are at anchor, though I fear the vessel's too crazy ever to see port again, you and I may drink a can together—till then, your servant.

Y. Man. Nay, nay, don't go yet. [Dancing.]

Adm. Why, d——n you, you vere about so, one might as well look for anchorage in a whirlpool, as think to hold a parley with you.

Y. Man. Well, come then, I will be serious—Do you ever pray at sea, admiral?

Adm. Why, what should we pray for? Except, indeed, when there's danger in the wind, and then, to be sure, that alters the case.

Y. Man. Well, now, there lies your error.

Adm. Error!—meaning me.—You?

Y. Man. Aye!—I hold it such an abominable ignorance of duty.

Adm. Ignorance of duty!—why, you palavering whipper-snapper, am I to be taught my duty, after having had the command of a fleet, by such a sneaking son of a whore as you?

Y. Man. Nay, but why so hot, my good friend? You cannot think I meant to offend you?

Adm. Not mean to offend, when you tell me I don't know how to command? Ignorance of duty, indeed—Out of my way, you live lumber—D—n you, I only thought you were mad, but now I find you're a fool.

[*Exit.*

Y. Man. Ha! ha! ha! ha! At any other time I should have been a good deal vexed to have offended old True Blue, that's certain; but at this moment my heart's so crowded with sensations of mirth and joy—with such a confused jumble of contending raptures—with so much delight at what has already passed, and such a maddening anticipation of what is yet to come, that no thought of apprehensive care can obtain sanctuary in my bosom. My dear Julia, my own Julia! Oh! that idea overpowers me with transport—Gad so, there's Sir William—if I stay here much longer, playing the fool, I shall be observed by some of the family, and then—adieu to all my hopes—What shall I do?—I'll return to the Star Inn, which is just in view of the house, and deceive the tedious interval with my companions whom I left there, till my fair day-star arises, that leads me to new life, to happiness, and love. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

*Scene I.—A nearer View of Sir William Wingrove's House.
(Moon-light.)*

Enter JULIA. She opens the door gently; and after an appearance of irresolution, shuts it after her. She then comes forward.

Julia. So, now my fate's decided!—What have I done?—I dare not think upon it—If Manly now deceives me, I am undone—Shall I go back,—and consent to be the wife of Lord Dartford?—that must follow—for but too well I know, that tenderness never yet prevailed upon the stern ambition of my father's nature—But why should I doubt my Henry's unstained honour?—Though he is wild, whom did he ever wrong?—Pardon, dear Manly—pardon the unjust suspicion of thy Julia—and see he comes to clear my heart of doubt.

[MANLY sings without.

Oh, gracious heaven, is this the man I've chosen to be the guardian of my honour!—Fly, fly, my feet—let me but reach my father's—the door is fast; I have now no hope left, unless the wild confusion that wine has made in him, prevent his observing me. Heaven grant it may!

[Conceals herself behind a tree, and draws a veil over her face.

Enter YOUNG MANLY, singing.

“Heighten every joy to-day, and never mind to-morrow.”

Aye, so say I.—The present—the present is the only time that's worth a wise man's concern—why should we give ourselves any trouble about to-morrow, when we don't know that to-morrow will ever reach us?—or that we shall reach it, which is pretty nearly the same

thing, I take it ; and then there is just so much good care thrown away.—'Fore heaven, the man that wrote that song must have been a most profound person—that single line ought to have immortalized him—it shall be my motto. [Sings.

“ Why the plague should we be sad,
 Whilst on earth we moulder ;
 Whether we're merry, or grave, or mad,
 We every day grow older.”

'Sdeath, the ground's full of rocks and quicksands, I think ; my feet either sink or stumble at every step—What can be the reason ? I that am so steady a goer—always, always was—all my life—Egad, I believe the thickets are going to dance—May be, they mistake me for Orpheus—Nay, gentlemen, if you pay such a compliment to my singing, I can do no less than take a turn with you—I am as frolicsome as you can be for the soul of you—so now, let me choose my partner.

[Catches at a tree, behind which JULIA is concealed, who shrieks.

By all the silvan powers, another Daphne ! [Kneels.
 Madam, behold a swain, not altogether so musical as Apollo, I grant you, but a good honest fellow for all that—So, madam, so—psha, never mind more words—let us go.

Julia. Oh, my hard fortune !

Y. Man. What do you say ?—Speak out, my angel !—I know that your voice is more tuneful than Philomel's, or mine—that your eyes are the sparkling harbingers of love—that your dimples are the chosen hiding-places of all the cupids—and those lips !——But hold—rot it—I had forgot—I can't see e'er a one of them—Never mind—no matter for that—I dare say it's all true ; and if it isn't, why then we must mend the matter with thinking.

Julia. Oh heavens ! is it possible !

Y. Man. No, certainly—it cannot be possible—it

isn't possible—Come, come, I know you are kind as you are beautiful, and so it is possible—and so, without more waste of time, come to my arms, and——

Julia. It is in vain to reason with him in this state—I must endeavour to divert his attention, and by that means escape him if I can.—If you will permit me to be your guide——

Y. Man. Enough, my pretty pilot; take me where you will. We will never part any more, shall we? No, never.

Julia. I dare say not, sir.

Y. Man. Not, sir?—Why to be sure not, sir—Never, never, never.

Julia. Let us walk quickly. [*Aside.*] Oh, heaven! assist me.

Y. Manly. As quick as you please, my angel—I'll fly, if you choose, for I'm very steady, and very loving.
[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—A Wood.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. At length, thank heaven! I have escaped.—Escaped—but is this a place of safety? What will become of me? Yet 'tis some comfort, that the day appears—Oh, Manly! thou hast made life hateful to me.—Who comes here?—I've surely seen his face. Oh! I remember I have seen him sometimes at my aunt's, with lace and gauzes—If he should not know me, perhaps I may prevail on him to conceal me—He has a wife, I know. Let me consider what I shall say to him.

Enter LARRON, with bundles.

Dese villain custome-house officers give von honest man no reste—You go to bed late—you rise early—pardie—you sit up all night—it make no difference,

dey vil be vid you—May foi, I believe they tink sleep contrabande. [*Sees JULIA.*] Ah! par St. Dominique, here be von young ladi en great agitation—Ah! par hazard her equipage est un peu derangé, and she be retire here till tout soit ajusté—a littel civilitié de ma parte, me produira peutêtre beaucoup de pratique on de ladi's—En verité, de torough-bred trader know how to faire son profit de chaque circonstance——Madame, excusé—but you seem beaucoup affligé si madame—if I can by de utmost exertion of mine contribuer en de smallest instance to votre accomodation, I shall consider de fortune vich led me dis vay, as de plus grande felicité de ma vie, de greatest happiness of my life.

Julia. He speaks very civilly; I think I may venture to tell him so much of my unhappy situation, as may let him know how much I need his assistance.

Larron. Madame, you no ansere—May I beg de faveur to be informe, if I can merite l'honneur de vous rendre le moindre service? Your servants, madame, ave you any lettél message to convey to dem? May I hope you will permit a me de vous escorter a votre carosse?

Julia. Sir, you mistake the matter entirely—I have neither coach, servants, nor friends at present.—The cruelty of one in whom I most confided, has involved me in this calamity; and I must thankfully avail myself of your obliging offers of service, by entreating the shelter of your roof, till I can dispose of myself, so as not to be an incumbrance to any one.

Lar. Eh, my dear—vat you say?—You no coche, no servantes, no friend, no house, no home, you want to come and live a vid me?—Non, non, ma fille—dat vill not do—non, non—Dere be de vat do you call? de maison d'industrie, de vorkhouse for de poor girl—Personne go to my house, but such as peut faire une belle depense.

Julia. [*Aside.*] Mercenary wretch!

[*Going.*

Lar. Holla! you littel girl—you tell me, can you vorke? Suppose dat I vas to take pitie upon your condition, can you pay me vell derefore?

Julia. What shall I say? I must bear with this low impertinence, to induce him to give me a shelter. [*To LARRON.*] I can, sir, embroider neatly, and make lace.

Lar. Oh pardie, you be von littel busy bee!—You can make love, too. Can you not, my dear?

Julia. Insupportable!—If, sir, you consider the favour you seemed inclined to confer, as a sanction for your impertinent freedom, I must beg you to leave me to my misfortunes.

Lar. Comme vous voulez, ma fille—dere not be many dat vill take you in—You may meet vid some, if you stay here long, dat vill make you vorse offer.

Julia. That's too true!—If I get to his house, his wife will protect me from his odious familiarity—I must try to make my peace. [*To LARRON.*] Perhaps, sir, I have been too hasty. If you will conduct me to your house, I shall consider it as an obligation which I shall endeavour by my utmost industry to repay.

Lar. Ha, hah!—You say so?—Vell den I vill tink about it. [*Aside.*] She poor, she pretty, she vorke—Mais elle est fiere comme une princesse—Vell, I vill have her—She be von fille dat know de vorld; it save so much trouble—She be von pauvre innocente, my glory vill be de greater. [*To JULIA.*] You be good girl, and I vill take you—I vill inform you vat you say to my vife as ve go along.

Julia. How one rash step has involved me in a labyrinth of difficulties—I see no end to it; yet dare not tread back the way I've gone. [*To LARRON.*] Very well, sir.

Lar. Vell, you hold up your head—You not be so cast down. Tenez—you carry dis bondel—you valk first—If you see un homme dat look like von officer des

custome, you run straight forward till you come to de stile, and vait dere for me.

Julia. Excuse me, sir; I cannot consent to be employed in any unfair transaction.

Lar. Vat, you not smogel for me, petite ingrate?—Must I not smogel for you? Must I not run you upon my vife? Are you not von littel piece of contrabande vous même?—You see, my dear, you have to deal vid von bel esprit—but prenez courage, I vill not be too hard vid you.—A ça—you vill do ver vell by and by.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—Sir William Wingrove's House.

Enter Mr. WINGROVE.

Mr. Wingrove. How powerful is the influence of prejudice! My reason convinces me that there is no other just criterion for deciding upon the merits of men, but such as grows out of their own personal good or ill properties. If it were true, that the qualities of the parent were transmitted to the progeny, then, indeed, it might be as necessary to establish the genealogy of a man, as to ascertain the pedigree of a horse. But the properties of the mind elude the frail laws of hereditary descent, and own no sort of obedience to their authority—How is it, then, that with this distinct light before me, I cannot help falling into my father's prejudices?—I feel them to be unjust; I know them to be absurd; and yet, unjust and absurd as they are, they influence my conduct in spite of me.—I love my sister—I know her affections are engaged to Young Manly—I am satisfied he is worthy of her—yet I am adverse to the match, and conspire with my father in throwing every obstacle in the way of its completion, and in favour of whom? Of Lord Dartford, a man void of feeling, sentiment, or sincerity—uniting in him every contra-

diction of depravity; cold, gay, ostentatious, and interested—But he is a man of birth—despicable distinction!

Enter O'DONNEL.

O'Don. Oh, sir, sir!—my young master—the house is in an uproar, sir, sir.

Mr. Win. Well, sir, what's the matter?

O'Don. Oh! I don't know what's the matter, sir; my young lady's the matter, sir—we're all undone, sir—She's gone, sir—nobody knows where, sir.

Mr. Win. My sister gone! impossible—Degenerate Julia! Is it thus you reward the kind, the anxious zeal of your friends to place you in a situation worthy the exalted regard they entertained for you; to throw yourself away upon the mean pretensions of a plebeian?—But where is my father?—Let me fly to him with the news of this disaster. [Exit.

Enter SIR WILLIAM, with Servants.

Sir Will. I'll not believe that she is gone.—Gone!—what—my daughter eloped at midnight! Go all of you and search again—I am certain she is hid somewhere.

O'Don. Suppose your honour then was to order the canal and the fish-ponds to be sarched, for I am certain if she be hid, it must be at the bottom of one of them.

Sir Will. Be dumb, horrible brute!—Would you have me think—Did I ever give her cause—Was I not ever the fondest of parents?

O'Don. Sartinly, your honour meant it all for her good. But when a young lady finds nothing to plase her in this world, she is apt sometimes to take a peep into the other to try the difference.

Sir Will. Begone! I say—find her, or I'll discharge you all for your negligence in suffering her to escape.

[Exit O'DONNEL and Servants.]

The conjectures of this blundering blockhead terrify me—I hope Julia has not in a fit of rash perverseness—Yet I think her piety——

Re-enter MR. WINGROVE.

Well, William, any news of your sister?

Mr. Win. No, sir, no news—but of her dishonour—Disgraceful girl!

Sir Will. O'Donnel alarms me exceedingly—he thinks that in a phrensy of disappointed passion she has——

Mr. Win. No, my dear sir, Julia is not so weary of life—The porter tells me he found all the doors leading to the road unbarr'd this morning. Wou'd I cou'd discover whether she had a companion in her flight!—If she be not recovered speedily, the disgrace will be indelible.—Lord Dartford will be here soon. What shall we say to him? Oh, shameless Julia!

Sir Will. Forbear, my son—these violent transports distress me even more than your sister's flight.—Consider that it is thro' you the pure blood of our family must descend to posterity—that thro' you the name of Wingrove must be transmitted to ages as distant and unknown as those from whence it sprung. Reflect a little, my son; bring reason to your aid, and consider how trifling and insignificant are the misfortunes of your sister, compar'd to objects so important, and so sacred as these—Be calm, then, William.

Mr. Win. I will endeavour it, sir.

Sir Will. If you were to go to Miss Herbert's, her acquaintance is so extensive, you perhaps may obtain some information of Julia there—Go, go, my son.

Mr. Win. I obey you, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Enter O'DONNEL.

O'Don. Lord Dartford, your honour.

Sir Will. He has not been informed of my daughter's absence?

O'Don. No, your honour; not a syllable has been spoken to him since he entered the house.

Sir Will. Where is he now?

O'Don. In the saloon, sir, in arnest discourse with your honour's chaplain.

Sir Will. Blockhead!—I'll go to him then. [*Exit.*

O'Don. Oh! 'tis a pretty blundering piece of business, fait.—Devil burn me, but if I didn't tink how it wou'd end. There's nothing so sure to make a young lady run away, as keeping her fast by the heels—O if I had a wife that I wanted to get rid of, fait, I wou'd keep her safe under lock and key. [*Exit.*

Scene IV.—Miss Herbert's House.

Enter MISS HERBERT and MRS. RACHEL CLEVELAND.

Miss Her. Miss Wingrove elop'd, aunt? Heaven grant it may be true! and that those to whom she has fled for refuge may be sensible of her merit—tho' I think I can guess the person.

Mrs. Rack. I have heard it supposed that young Mr. Manly had a place in her affections—If he is the protector she has made choice of, I fear the lady's character, and the young man's life, are in equal danger.

Miss Her. The adventure wears a much less formidable aspect to me, I confess, provided she escapes her father's pursuit.—Oh, how I shall enjoy the vexation of Sir William and his son, at finding all the views of their persecuting ambition thus happily disappointed!

Mrs. Rack. Nay, Harriet, now I think you do not speak with your usual sincerity—Mr. Wingrove, I am persuaded, is not indifferent to you.

Miss Her. Dear aunt, you are partly right, and partly wrong. Mr. Wingrove has, I acknowledge, touch'd my heart a little; but the contagion has not yet made its way to my head—For tho' the little god may have

thrown away upon me an idle arrow or so, he has kept his bandage as an embellishment to his own person : I can see the failings of my swain as well as another.

Mrs. Ruch. You're a mad girl.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Wingrove, madam.

Miss Her. Desire him to walk up. [*Exit SERVANT.*]
Now I must tease him a little—do not oppose me, my dear aunt. I've a mind to lead him to believe, that his sister is under my protection—this will serve her, by stopping further pursuit for a while, and at the same time put him into a most entertaining rage with me.

Enter MR. WINGROVE.

But, dear madam, have you been kind enough to see that every avenue to the east wing of the house is secured? Has good care been taken that the postern-gate, at the lower end of the western parterre, is properly fastened? Are the man-traps all ready for snapping? Are the spikes new sharpen'd on the south wall?—Have orders been given, that if any of the inquisitive family of the Wingroves—Oh, Mr. Wingrove!—you come upon one so suddenly—but I am overjoyed to see you, sir.

Mr. Win. I am bound in politeness, madam, to return the compliment; yet after what I heard at my entrance, there would, perhaps, have been no great offence to truth, if the joy had been suppressed on both sides.

Miss Her. You do well, sir, not to express more than you feel.

Mr. Win. If I did, madam, it appears I shou'd not want a precedent for my justification.

Miss Her. But why, Mr. Wingrove, if as you are constantly telling me I use you so very, very ill, why will you throw yourself perpetually in my way?—I don't recollect that I sent for you—Did I, aunt? Did

any body go to desire dear Mr. Wingrove to come to us?—I forget, I vow.—And yet, perhaps, I might—for I know it does him a world of good, poor dear man!—He is fond of primitive times, and, like all your good people of those days, loves to throw himself in the way of a little wholesome persecution.—But now, sir, answer me this, you unjust—you ungrateful man, you!—Did I ever disappoint you whenever you came here for a little healthful mortification in a morning?—Was I ever the person to send you away without your errand?—No, sir, with all your malice, I defy you to lay that to my charge.

Mr. Win. Madam, I have many obligations, to be sure, to the gentleness of your nature; but I entreat you not to add one more to the many kindnesses I owe to it, that of driving me to distraction—Will you have the goodness to answer me, madam—Is not my sister here?

Miss Her. Bless me, sir! and suppose she is.—But it is all of a piece—you set out with informing me you were very sorry to see me, and now you would forbid me all intercourse with the only part of your family I have any desire to be acquainted with.

Mr. Win. Let me conjure you, my dear lovely tyrant, not to play with my anxiety—suspend awhile the triumphs of your sarcasm; you cannot misunderstand the agitations of my heart at this moment—you know the cause of them—If you have given my sister an asylum——

Miss Her. Then, sir, with equal solemnity, I desire you to believe, that if I have given your sister the shelter you imagine, I shall not withdraw it to gratify the prejudices of any of her relations; besides, sir, were your sister assured she should be secure from the odious danger that threatens her from a man she detests, she would, I am convinced, be happy to throw herself at her father's feet, and on that condition——

Mr. Win. It is a condition, however, that will not be granted her, madam. What! when our honour, when the dignity of our house are committed—shall all be sacrificed to the frivolous partiality of a disobedient girl?

Miss Her. Give me leave, sir, to tell you, that you seem to me to mistake this honour for which you declaim so warmly; honour holds no society with injustice.

Mr. Win. Injustice, madam!

Miss Her. Yes, sir; there can be no injustice equal to that of compelling a woman to so sacred a connection as a married union, against the known and settled preference of her heart. It is besides, sir, acting a very ungenerous part towards Lord Dartford himself.

Mr. Win. Not at all, madam; Lord Dartford knows of her aversion, and has spirit enough to disregard it.

Miss Her. Does he, sir? then indeed there can be no doubt, with all due deference to his spirit, but he merits it.—But, in the meantime, Mr. Wingrove, permit me to embrace the very earliest opportunity of expressing my gratitude for this new philosophy you have been kind enough to teach us. You are the first lover, I believe, that ever told his mistress to her face, that a union of the affections was a superfluous ingredient in the composition of matrimony.—You made the discovery, sir—you will leave it to me, to make the proper use of it.

Mr. Win. Nay, madam, if you are determined to make no other use of what I say, but to pervert it into ridicule or injury, I know nothing that's left me, but to use the only privilege which I think you will not deny me, that of making a speedy departure. I have long despaired of exciting any sympathy in you towards myself, yet the distresses of an afflicted brother, I had fondly believed, would have inclined you to forbearance at least, if they had failed to produce any more active effect upon your humanity. [Exit.

Miss Her. Haughty to the last.—Well, thank heaven! this interview is over. Julia, I have fought hard for you.

Mrs. Rach. Indeed, my dear niece, you carry matters too far: you will certainly lose Mr. Wingrove some of these days, if you persevere in your present treatment of him.

Miss Her. No, my dear madam—certainly no.—The symptoms of love vary with the difference of constitution; and, in a lively nature, there is no surer proof of it than a little playful malignity—and that the man ought to have sense enough to understand; or, wanting that, I am sure he has too little to entitle him to become the lord and master of a young woman of my spirit and pretensions.

Mrs. Rach. Aye, but have a care, Harriet.

Miss Her. Well, madam, I'll do my best—but, indeed, if I cannot laugh and tease him out of some of his faults, we shall make a miserable couple. I can be a willing slave to a gentle master; but I should prove a most rebellious subject to a tyrant, I am certain.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.—Mr. Manly's.

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Y. Man. Heigho! What is't o'clock—I wonder? My head aches horridly—perhaps a little tea, timely administered, will set all to rights; we'll try.

Enter WILLIAM.

William, how came I to have no better accommodation than the sopha, last night?—I suppose I was a little gone; but you might have put me to bed, sirrah.

Will. Sir, you know I wasn't at home—you employed me elsewhere.

Y. Man. Elsewhere? Hang me if I remember.—why, how did I employ you?

Will. You know, sir, when I called upon you at the Star Inn, you sent me to hire a little vessel to carry you and Miss Wingrove to France.

Y. Man. Miss Wingrove and me to France!—Peace, you profane rascal!

Will. Dear sir, I wonder you should forget—You know you was almost beside yourself for joy yesterday, and told me that Miss had consented to be yours; and that you should marry her in France first, for fear of accidents: and then you bid me hire a good tight vessel, and to tell the master, that if he would bring to in the west creek, and put to sea directly upon your getting on board, you would give him a hundred guineas, as soon as he had landed you upon the coast of France.

Y. Man. Eh!—how?—Miss Wingrove—coast of France!

Will. But it growing day-light, and the captain getting sulky, thinking as I had made a fool of him, I made the best of my way home to see what was the matter; and now it's all the talk this morning, that Miss Wingrove is run away.

Y. Man. What's that? Julia left her father's!—And where is she? Tell me this instant.

Will. Dear heart, sir! why how should I know? I thought she had been with you.

Y. Man. This is most unintelligible.—William, are you sure I am awake now? Don't laugh, you rascal!—Speak, fool! Are you certain I am awake, I say?—I believe I had better convince myself by beating the fellow handsomely; what say you, sir?

Will. Why, sir, only—that if it be the same thing to your honour, I would as lieve you would be so good as try some other experiment.

Y. Man. Heavens! what a confusion of horrors

breaks in upon my mind—My Julia fled, and I not the partner of her flight!—Oh! I dare not speak my apprehensions even to myself!—If they are true, I am undone—Wretch that I am! were that all, it would be a trifle; but, Julia, my life, my soul, my love, I have ruined thee. I feel it all come rushing o'er my mind; yet still it has the wildness of a dream—I recollect something of a fair creature weeping and entreating me to let her go—Was it possible, that in any state I could let her sue in vain?

Will. I hope, sir, you'll forgive me for being so bold, but I am afraid miss and you have had some difference.

Y. Man. What's that to you, sir?—Contemptible villain that I am, I blush that my own servant should guess at my conduct—Yet she has escaped Lord Dartford—How know I what she has escaped, or what endured? Those heavenly charms of her's may have exposed her to worse than robbery! Yet surely her melodious tongue would subdue a tiger!—Did it soften thee, thou more obdurate far than any other of thy kindred savages in the forest?—And yet 'tis hard—'Twas to her own dear health I sacrificed my reason—Oh! Julia,—if I had lov'd thee less, I had not deserved to have lost thee—Perhaps William might get some intelligence—I cannot let him know how I have acted—Selfish wretch! dost thou start at shame?—May he not bring word where she has taken refuge—Possibly I can serve her—Not for myself—I renounce all hope—Yet if I can but serve her—William.

Will. Sir.

Y. Man. I have behaved like a scoundrel, William—worse than a brute. I went to meet Miss Wingrove, and you find how I qualified myself to be her protector.—Where she is, I know not—Go, inquire, good William—and be speedy—Go to her father's—every where—and bring me word before I'm quite distracted—

Stay, I'll go too—we'll divide, and meet at the post-house an hour hence.

Will. Sir, you're so much flurried, you had better stay here till I come back.

Y. Man. Don't talk, sir—And do you hear?—Take care you don't get drunk, sir—I know your failing, rascal; but when matters of importance are in agitation, none—no, none but a scoundrel like myself would degrade his nature by basely unfitting it for all the functions which render it either useful or respectable.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

Scene I.—Larron's House.

Enter MRS. LARRON and JULIA.

Mrs. Lar. So, my pretty young madam, I have found you out, have I? But I guessed how it was from the first, hussey.

Julia. Is there any thing I can say that will convince you?

Mrs. Lar. Why no, to be sure there an't—Don't you think as all you says must go for nothing, after all that fine masquerading story trumped up between my husband and you? He said you was just com'd out of a nunnery. What sort of a nunnery was it, I wonder?

Julia. Good madam, let me prevail on you to listen to my unhappy story.

Mrs. Lar. Well, child, you may go on, I hears you.

Julia. Your husband found me this morning, deprived (by a most unlooked-for accident) of friends, of home, of every thing.

Mrs. Lar. You must be a good un by that—Well, let's hear—go on, child.

Julia. I made him acquainted with my distress, and he agreed to afford me shelter, till I could form some plan, adapted to my melancholy situation.

Mrs. Lar. And so you'd have me believe, as you and my husband know'd nothing of one another before this morning?—Hey?

Julia. I can solemnly assure you, that this morning was the first of our acquaintance.

Mrs. Lar. Well, have a care that you doesn't equivikit now—If I finds you equivikiting, you shall dearly repent it, I promise you—And so you says as you wants work—Why, if I thought you would behave yourself as you should do, may be I'd find you a friend myself, that wou'dn't require much of you; and I suppose you don't care how little you does—But I should like to know how you lost your last friend.

Julia. Let me entreat you, madam, to spare me upon that point.

Mrs. Lar. Aye, you none on you likes to tell—I suppose it wa'n't for no good as he turn'd you off. [*Julia turns aside and weeps.*] What a poor little whimpering thing it is—I wonders where she can have been, as I have never seen her afore—If I can get her off to old 'Squire Manly, who is a little like my husband for goodness, it will be putting her out of Larron's way, and be something into my pocket—Well, well, adone crying, do—I suppose you are not so dilliket as to object to a middle-aged gentleman.

Julia. Has he any family, madam?

Mrs. Lar. Oh, yes—he's a son and a daughter, and a wife into the bargain—but you know that's no hobsticle to the likes of you.

Julia. Quite the contrary, madam; I am glad to hear it.

Mrs. Lar. Well, that's as much as ever I hard—But that's none of my business.

Julia. Is the gentleman an embroiderer, madam, or what?

Mrs. Lar. Embroiderer?—No—the gentleman's a gentleman.

Julia. Then, madam, I should prefer going into a family where I might be useful, rather than to become an idle dependent on any one.

Mrs. Lar. What the deuce is in the wind now, I wonders? Well, the gentleman is an embroiderer; so let's have no more of your hums and haws, but get up to your own room, and be sure you doesn't stir till I calls you. [*Exit JULIA.*] If I can tell what to make of her, she's so full of her fine words, and things—As I lives, there's the old 'squire going by; I'll bring him back. Mr. Manly, Mr. Manly—It's a pity he's so old; for he has faults enough to make him agreeable to any woman.

Enter OLD MR. MANLY.

So you forgets your old acquaintance, sir; I warn't worth thinking on; you goes by the door, without ever axing how one does.

O. Man. What, do you think I can ever forget my durable blossom of five-and-forty?

Mrs. Lar. Forty! Lord, sir, why you reckons every body's years by your own lady's—I shan't be the age you mention these five years.

O. Man. You mean you hav'n't been the age I mention these five years.—The register can add nothing to the evidence of your face—which proclaims fifty as strongly as if it was in black and white in the parish books.

Mrs. Lar. Ah! you're a merry man. No wonder madam is so jealous of you.

O. Man. To tell you the truth, Mrs. Larron, I never thought of roving till she put it in my head, by her doubts of my constancy.

Mrs. Lar. Why, sir, contradiction's as natural to

gentlemen as to ladies, for any thing as I see——Now there is up stairs——

O. Man. What, what is there up stairs?

Mrs. Lar. As pretty a young creter as ever you set eyes on.

O. Man. Let me go and look at her directly.

Mrs. Lar. Nay, but stay—She's as full of freaks as she can hold. I hardly knows how to deal with her—She says she wants to work at embroidering—But that's all a pertence—Howsoever, I must tell her at first you wants to employ her that way.——I'll bring her down in a minute. [Exit.

O. Man. Hang her—I wish she had not called me in. I begin to be too old for these follies, I have half a mind to be off—But when a man has continued in a bad practice for a length of time, it almost costs him as much shame to make good a reformation, as it did at first to venture on the transgression—But I hear a lighter foot on the stair-case than Dame Larron's; and so for the present good-bye, morality—we'll call upon you another time.

Enter MISS JULIA WINGROVE and MRS. LARRON.

O. Man. By all that's lovely, an angel! [Starts.] Miss Wingrove!

Julia. Mr. Manly!

O. Man. Madam, you must think it very odd—very strange, I say, and very odd—to see me here upon such an occasion—Appearances, I confess, make against me.—Yet upon a proper explanation, madam, I don't fear being able to set all to rights.

Julia. Sir, to see you here, was what indeed I did not expect—By some means, I find the place of my concealment is discovered—But, sir, though I cannot deem it otherwise than amiable in you, to attempt some apology for the conduct of your son, yet I must tell you, in the anguish of my heart, that I would sooner become the wife of the man I once most abhorred, than unite

myself to him, or even listen to the smallest palliation of his perfidy—And now, sir, excuse my abrupt departure. [Exit.]

O. Man. Why, Mrs. Larron, are we awake here? —Is there nothing of enchantment in all this? Egad, I hope it's no trick of yours, mistress.

Mrs. Lar. Trick?—Deuce take me if I knows of any, I hav'n't been able to find what you and she meant, for my part.

O. Man. As to what she meant; that does not appear so difficult to unravel—How she came here is what puzzles me.

Mrs. Lar. Why, my husband brought her—He found her like a stray'd sheep, and so seiz'd her for his own.

O. Man. Your husband must be a courageous sort of a man, I think, to steal a young lady of her pretensions—And you're a pretty gentlewoman, to come and draw a man in to make a fool of himself—Here did I expect to find a pretty little good-humoured, good-natured, insignificant sort of a good-for-nothing plaything; when, instead of that, I am exposed to encounter the reproachful glances of Miss Julia Wingrove.

Mrs. Lar. Miss Wingrove! My stars! Why is she the runaway lady that all the country's up in arms about? [Aside.] I am glad to hear this—Well, sir, I'm a little in a hurry, and so I knows you'll excuse me.

O. Man. Oh, with all my soul—I can find excuses enough for going away. The only difficulty is, how to discover an apology for coming in. [Exit.]

Mrs. Lar. Well, sure some luck'll come of this at last. Who'd have thought she'd been such a proud man's daughter, so as she be-humbled herself to me—I hope she ha'n't giv'n me the slip, though.—If she is fairly out of the house, I dares not follow her. But I warrant she's gone back to the room—She's too genteel to have sense enough to take care of herself. [Exit.]

Scene II.—Manly's House.

Enter Mrs. and Miss MANLY.

Mrs. Man. Surely, Emma, it was very indiscreet to give Mr. Welford permission to wait on you, at a time when your brother and he are at variance.

Miss Man. Well, madam, let him be refused admittance. I find every caprice of Henry's is to be complied with, however it may interfere with any prospects of mine. But I dare say he will have the goodness to repay your tenderness with his usual gratitude; for, if I mistake not, there is some new adventure in agitation.

Mrs. Man. Don't speak with so much asperity of your brother, Emma: if I seem to feel a particular interest about him, it is not that I entertain a greater affection for Henry than I do for you. But where a young man's imprudencies are constantly exposing him to danger, there the anxiety of common humanity is added to the apprehension of motherly affection; so that it is only the same regard more powerfully awakened, and pity taking part with duty.—But what makes you imagine that he is at present engaged in some new adventure?

Miss Man. Indeed, my dear madam, I am sorry I spoke so harshly; but my reason for apprehending that he has some wild scheme on foot, is, that yesterday evening his servant told my maid, that his master would soon be a happy man. William staid out all night; and this morning they went abroad with a sort of mystery together, when William told my woman, that his young master had, according to custom, been cutting out vexation for himself.

Mrs. Man. Never, sure, had any woman so much to disturb her peace as I have! What, with Harry's imprudence, and Mr. Manly's neglect of me, it is a miracle how I support it.

Miss Man. Dear madam, your own apprehensions

create all your affliction in that quarter. Indeed, I have heard my father say as much.

Mrs. Man. What, could not he be satisfied with disregarding me himself, but he must endeavour to prejudice your mind against me?

Miss Man. Oh, you mistake my father's meaning entirely, madam. He was only lamenting your want of confidence in him, and saying, that had he never been causelessly suspected, he should never have given you cause of suspicion.

Mrs. Man. So then, he owns he has wronged me? He confesses his infidelity, and makes no scruple of avowing it to you, too. This is beyond even what I ever supposed. I did, indeed, think there was a little inconstancy in his nature. I confess I had some slight suspicions of that sort. Now I find I am justified in all my conjectures. Oh, Mr. Manly, you have much to answer for on my account.

Miss Man. I hope not, my dear mother—I am sure he always speaks of you with great tenderness.

Mrs. Man. Does he, my dear Emma? Well, and what does he say?

Miss Man. I have heard him say, madam, that could you but confide in him, you would be one of the happiest couples in the world.

Mrs. Man. And did he, indeed, my dear girl, say this? Don't you flatter me now, my child?

Miss Man. Be assur'd, madam, that he said every syllable I have related to you.

Mrs. Man. How could I ever make him uneasy——

Enter OLD MANLY.

O. Man. Mrs. Manly, my dear—Emma, my child, have you heard——

Miss Man. Oh yes, sir, that Miss Wingrove has left her father's, and my mother is alarm'd, lest my brother——

O. Man. No, no, my dear, I can ease you of your apprehensions respecting Henry: Miss Wingrove is not with him, I can assure you.

Mrs. Man. How do you know that, my dear Mr. Manly?

O. Man. Why I saw her about an hour ago.

Mrs. Man. You saw Miss Wingrove! You surprise me! Where?

O. Man. At Mr. Larron's.

Mrs. Man. And pray, Mr. Manly, what business carried you there?

O. Man. No, 'twas not at Mr. Larron's neither—yes, now I recollect it was there too.

Mrs. Man. 'Tis very strange Mr. Manly, that you should be at such a loss to know where it was you saw her.

O. Man. Why, I remember now very well it was at Mrs. Larron's; I happened to be there, and she came in.—Pshaw!—how I blunder—I mean she went in there, and——

Mrs. Man. You followed her—yes, I begin to guess how it was.

O. Man. This is ever the way! Perpetually cross-examin'd, and contradicted.

Mrs. Man. It is you that contradict yourself, Mr. Manly.

O. Man. Why, will you give me leave to tell my own story my own way?

Mrs. Man. Another time, sir, it will be better policy to determine what way you choose to tell your stories before you begin to relate them: you will be less perplexed—less puzzled with the variety of your inventions—But pray let us hear the sequel.

O. Man. Nay you may guess the remainder; if you will not listen to the beginning of my story, I'll be curs'd if you shall hear the conclusion of it. [Exit.

Mrs. Man. Oh! Emma, child, what a life is mine,

just to be relieved from one apprehension by being plung'd into another—Who could have believ'd your father would so forget himself as to seduce——

Miss Man. Dear madam! 'tis impossible your fears shou'd be true—If you will give me leave I'll follow my father—I dare say he will acquaint me with the whole affair.

Mrs. Man. Go, my dear Emma, go. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—An Inn.

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Y. Man. No tidings to be gain'd of my Julia; where can she be? Wand'ring perhaps—perhaps—oh! I dare not trust myself with the suggestions of my own thoughts! How shall I avoid them—oh! Manly! thou wert to have met a trembling angel kindly ready to have thrown herself into thy arms for ever—and——

Enter WILLIAM.

Will, what news? does she live? where is she? is she married?

Will. Sir, I hope at last to bring some comfort.

Y. Man. Honest William! well, your news, my good friend.

Will. About half an hour ago I began to be quite out of hope, but thinks I, I'll not return to master till I've got some account to carry him, come on't what will.

Y. Man. That's a good fellow; well.

Will. And so I went from barbers to barbers, and from bakers to bakers, and from inn to inn, and from alehouse to alehouse.

Y. Man. Are you sure you hav'n't been drinking, Will? If you have, you know its what I've sworn never to forgive.

Will. Lord, sir, drinking?—No, sir, no more than in a reasonable way—not to disguise myself, an like your honour.

Y. Man. Tell me of my Julia, you blockhead.

Will. Why your honour's so touchy you see; if you'd ha' been pleas'd to have heard me.

Y. Man. Well, well, that's a good Will—go on—go on.

Will. Well, pray sir, be pacified—Well, and so, sir, as I was sitting at the Fox and Gridiron in West-lane, who should come in promiscuously, but Larron the smuggler, as conceited as you please—so I never much cared for having any talk with the fellow, being as he's a foreigner and a great rogue. However, thinks I, all your French folk have woundy long tongues, and if he knows any thing, fifty to one but he pops it out.

Y. Man. Pshaw! Curse your tedious introductions.

Will. So says I—Mr. Larron, have you heard what a stir there is in our village—such a to do——

Y. Man. Pish—go on—I say—go on.

Will. There—there's a young lady lost, says I—"Wee," says he, and there be young one ladie found too.

Y. Man. What's that?—go on, good William.

Will. What, says I, have you had the luck to find her then? says I. "Wee," says he again, spluttering out a French oath, and she have the luck to find me as well—Oh ho, says I, you'd make me believe that she run away for your sake, would you? Make a believe, says he, she not be the first young ladi, that run away for my sake—Young ladies have droll fancies then, says I.—But mayhap she may'nt be the same that all the rout is about—she that I mean is a raw-boned gawky girl, pretty round shoulder'd (just to sift him you see, sir).—Round shoulder, says he, round shoulder. More blue—She one model—she von Venus—so then I knew we were right, for I've heard your honour say miss was as like Venus as two pease.

Y. Man. Will, you have conducted the whole affair like a complete orator, and profound politician.

Will. Very like, sir, but had'nt we better go after miss for fear of her father's getting her back again?

Y. Man. Certainly—yet now that my fears for her safety are somewhat abated, the recollection of my offence places itself between us as an insurmountable obstacle to our ever meeting again.

Will. Lord, sir, why to my thinking you had better go and ask her pardon, and then there'll be an end on't.

Y. Man. Never—I can never think of asking her to pardon me.

Will. Why, dear sir, how hard hearted you are.

Y. Man. [*Speaking to himself without regarding the presence of his servant.*] I have given her such cause of resentment, that it wou'd be an affront to her justice, as well as her delicacy, even to supplicate forgiveness.

Will. Aye, aye, see what good'll come of these me-grims.

Y. Man. Any common penitent may look with a rational confidence for pardon, but he who has sinned against the sanctity of beauty, and the religion of a sworn and plighted affection, cannot, ought not, to expect forgiveness——

Will. Nay sure, sir, do listen to a——

Y. Man. But come—Though I must now for ever forego the dear hope of calling Julia mine, yet if she will but suffer me to possess the soothing reflection of having rescued her from the persecutions of her family, I will bear my loss without a murmur, and resign my future days to patient suffering and unavailing regret—Follow me, sirrah! [*Exit.*]

Will. Certainly, sir—how difficult it is to make two people think alike in this world—I cannot bring myself to be of my master's mind for the soul of me. [*Exit.*]

*Scene IV.—A Wood.**Enter MR. WELFORD.*

Wel. What an unlucky fellow thou art, Welford—Here have I by my Emma's order been wandering this hour in pursuit of Manly—One wou'd think that he knew my intentions, and had hid himself to avoid me—Ha! who can this be who's looks betray so much agitation and distress? The grief must be of magnitude indeed that thus presents itself to the licentious comment of every unfeeling passenger—What can be the cause that has reduced loveliness like this [*retires*] to so cruel an affliction?

Enter JULIA.

Julia. Whither shall I fly?—What refuge is there left me—injur'd—insulted—pursued—persecuted every way—what more cou'd vice itself endure? And what indeed have I not sustained of its torments, saving only the pang of consciousness? Yet that's something—Whither shall I now direct my trembling feet? Where, where hope to meet a friend.

Wel. That friend is made, madam, if he's happy enough to be accepted—Pardon me for thus intruding on your griefs, and only rejoice me by saying in what way I can be accessory to your service.

Julia. May I believe you, sir?—I have of late been so much the sport of cruelty, that I dare hardly think any one sincere that approaches me with the voice of kindness—Yet your countenance indicates compassion.

Wel. It would be false to my nature, madam, if it indicated any thing less on the present occasion. But, madam, you talked of being pursued—If so—Permit me for the present to conduct you to my house—I have some female relations there, with whom a temporary residence can reflect no disgrace to your reputation—May I, madam, be favour'd by your compliance?

Julia. My tears must thank you, sir—I have no words to do it.

Wel. This way if you please, madam. [Exeunt.]

Scene V.—Larron's House.

Enter MR. LARRON and YOUNG MANLY.

Lar. Sir, vat you vant? Pardie vat you make noise in my house—de house in England you call de chateau, de castel—vat you mean, you besiege my castel, sir?—Vat you vant, hey?

Y. Man Want!—must I repeat it to you a hundred times, you blockhead? I want Miss Wingrove—where is she? Miss Wingrove, sir, Miss Wingrove, is the fellow dumb? Produce Miss Wingrove—Produce the young lady you brought home this morning—let me see her instantly.

Lar. De young ladi, qui m'accompagnoit ce matin, vat right have you to make question of me, sir? I know noting of de young ladi—I nò lock de ladi up, Monsieur—You say she Miss Wingrove. If Miss Wingrove shose rader to come to my house den go to her fader's ce n'est pas ma faute; if she take into her head to go away again, ce n'est pas ma faute neider.

Y. Man. I would advise you, sir, not to be altogether so indifferent upon this occasion—You may not perhaps be aware that I possess a most excellent remedy for a certain complaint called in your country, *sang froid*—and if your symptoms should continue so very alarming, I fancy I shall feel myself under the necessity of applying it. [Showing his cane.]

Lar. Monsieur! you not take a me right—my deficiency of de langue Angloise must s'il vous plait be mon excuse—Veritablement, I not know vere de young ladi be, more den yourself, sir. Vous plait il you please to make demande of my vife.

Enter Mrs. LARRON.

Monsieur elle aura peutetre, so much complaisance for you to inform of de cause of de ladi's departure, but pour moi, she vil not have de condescension de m'instruire pas u'n seul syllable.

Y. Man. Well, Mrs. Larron, you hear I am referred to you, will you favour me with some account of Miss Wingrove?

Mrs. Lar. Dear heart a day—Here's a racket and a fuss indeed! I wishes she'd been fur enough before she set her foot within my doors, I knows.

Y. Man. Nay, but Mrs. Larron, I must know immediately where she is.

Mrs. Lar. Must you, sir?—Why then you must know more than I can tell you—Your father came to visit her.

Y. Man. My father!

Mrs. Lar. Yes, sir—and so she went away—that's all I knows.

Y. Man. Did she go with him?

Mrs. Lar. Why yes, sir,—I suppose so—Lord, you axes one so many questions.

Y. Man. My dear Mrs. Larron, why wou'dn't you make me happy sooner, by saying so at once?

Mrs. Lar. Lord, one should have a fine life on't indeed, if one was to do nothing but make every body happy.

Y. Man. Your economy in that respect, madam, is at least good natured to your visitors, and as I have no inclination to disturb so laudable a cruelty I will wish you a good morning. [Exit.]

Mrs. Lar. And a good riddance of you then, if you goes to that. This comes all along with you, Larron, I'm sure I may say it's a judgment upon you for thinking to serve me so.

Lar. It be von judgment done upon ma follie to keep

in de house von termagante like yourself—De young ladi like ver well to come to my house—She beg, she pray to come—I bring her to you—I leave her vid you—Vat she do den? Ma foi, she run away directement.

Mrs. Lar. Was it so indeed? And so I was in madam's way was I? Oh this is pretty usage indeed! to me who have been the making of you.

Lar. You not hold your tongue, begar, I tourne you out of doors, tout de suite.

Mrs. Lar. You turn me out' doors, Larron? I dares you to do it—You knows as I knows enough to hang you if I pleases—You forgets who broke open—

Lar. Vat you keep quarrel, quarrel for? You know I not like the quarrel—You and I be good friend—A ca—Give me your hand—pardie—I vill set all right—I vill make you my vife.

Mrs. Lar. Will you? But I am grown a little too wise for that now; I sees you aim well enough, you only wants to get clear of my evidence, and to have the law of your side, for using me ill—No, no, Lewis, I am not such a fool as you thinks me.

Lar. Vill any ting please you? You juste now complain—

Mrs. Lar. Aye, but now d'ye see, I will keep my freedom as security for your good behaviour—You are in my power now, and so I will keep you—I knows you have no love for me, but I will make you fear me.

Lar. Eh bien, my dear, we understand von anoder now—you now be ma maistresse en toute choses et pour toujours.

Mrs. Lar. What's that you are jabbering?

Lar. I say, my dear, dat you are so convince me of your great discretion dat you now be my mistress in all tings, and for ever.

Mrs. Lar. Oh! why that's very well—come into dinner then like a good creter as you are, and never, my dear Lewis, never, never forget, that it is in my power to hang you.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene 1.—Miss Herbert's House.

Enter MISS HERBERT and LORD DARTFORD.

Miss Her. I am happy to see your lordship—I hope you bring good tidings of Miss Wingrove.

Lord D. Indeed, my dear madam, you flatter yourself and me. I was sent here, in pursuit of good tidings, or of any tidings—for after the most prodigal expense of bodily fatigue, we are just as much in the dark as ever.

Miss Her. What, no intelligence?

Lord D. None—none—I have just left her fantastic father, and her imperious brother, almost as anxiously on the hunt for this modern relation, as if they were persecuting an old parchment, to bring forth a lurking morsel of ancient kindred in the reign of king Lud, or queen Boadicea. It is very unaccountable.

Miss Her. Unaccountable indeed!

Lord D. I mean every way unaccountable—the motives that could have led to her escape, as well as the success with which she has accomplished it. Women are not apt to misunderstand their happiness in these matters—I cannot lay that to their charge, positively.

Miss Her. [*Aside.*] Coxcomb!—a thought occurs to me, by which if I succeed I shall be better enabled to reconcile matters with my haughty lover, and rescue Julia from her embarrassments should she be discovered—I'll make him believe I have a fancy for him myself. [*To LORD DARTFORD.*] Indeed, my lord, as your lordship very justly observes, women are but seldom guilty of such extravagant inattention to their own interests—giddy girl—what would she have aspired to?—such rank—such accomplishments!

Lord D. Yes; and such a rooted—such a disinterested—such an inviolable attachment.

Miss Her. To be sure, my lord. Obdurate Julia! Where were your eyes? Where was your sensibility? Where had you mislaid your understanding?

Lord D. Very true; where indeed? I that lived but for her?

Miss Her. That an affection so ardent—a constancy so noble—should receive so ill a return! Unkind Miss Wingrove! [Sighs heavily.]

Lord D. Eh! What's this?—I begin to perceive something here; and the best on it is, she has a better fortune than the other—I wish I had not talked so much of my constancy. I must wheel about though. [To MISS HERBERT.] And yet, Miss Herbert, I cannot help thinking that, latterly, Miss Wingrove hardly appeared to me to preserve that——

Miss Her. No, indeed, my lord—I have partly thought so too.

Lord D. That kind of suavity, as it were—that inexpressible something.

Miss Her. That plaintive delicacy—that deprecating eye—those imploring smiles—that persuasion, which carried with it the authority of conquest; and that gentle command, which turned enforced captivity into voluntary submission. [Aside.] Dear girl, I cannot help doing her justice in the very heat of this feigned hostility.

Lord D. And then her spirits—have some how or other——

Miss Her. Yes, her spirits, too, have lost that elegant dejection, that pensive apathy—that graceful mope—if one may so express it, that used to shed the soft benignant influence of an autumn evening over every thing around her. How blind have I been! now that your lordship suggests it, I see it all. [Aside.] I am obliged to help him out in his very abuse, for he knows too little of love's rhetoric, even to hate with eloquence.

Lord D. Now there is a person, in whose radiant eyes, and sparkling decorums, the majesty of imperial cupid sits in state, and dispenses innocuous glories with the careless profusion of a city feast, or the dazzling splendour of a courtly gala. There is a person——

Miss Her. Your lordship means Miss Manly?—Yes, indeed, she is a fine young woman enough——

Lord D. Miss Manly! Miss Manly, madam, is as a scintillating link to the gorgeous orb of day, compared to the ineffable divinity of my prostrate adoration.

Miss Her. Whom can your lordship mean?

Lord D. Mean! whom should I mean—whom must I mean, whom can I mean, but the celestial phoenix of her sex, the divine Miss Herbert?

Miss Her. Me, my lord!—Good heaven!—I am so confused all on a sudden—Did your lordship say me?

Lord D. Yes, yes, your adorable, everlasting self.

Miss Her. If your lordship really entertains—if your lordship has, indeed, done me the honour to have conceived a passion——

Lord D. A passion!—A flame—a conflagration—a volcano!

Miss Her. Nay now, my lord, I can no longer doubt the plain sincerity of your professions—but as it is a fixed rule with me, rather to follow than to lead, in events of this awful importance, I should wish to avoid any further communication with a person of your lordship's dangerous eloquence, till the proper sanction of my relations has been previously obtained; my aunt would be too happy to receive any proposals of your lordship's; till then permit me to take my leave.—Successful, even beyond my hopes. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*]

Lord D. Hah, hah! Now this I call being in luck—just as one had lost scent in one quarter, to have a nobler game started in another.—Now gad take me, 'tis very odd, but what a blunderbuss I am at a speech—I mean in the love way—for on other subjects I can de-

liver myself with a becoming intelligibility enough ; but we higher order of beings, that have sense enough never to be more than merely artificial lovers, as we never understand the real orthodox gibberish of the passion, so when we once get to talk upon it, we never know when to stop.—Now that scintillating link—gorgeous orb—conflagration, and volcano, were not at all to my liking, but what could I do ? I must say something—but above all, what had I to do with an allusion to a city feast ? What has a city feast to do among the delicacies of a lover's commons ? Well, I must read for it—at least till I am married ; and then, indeed, it will be full time to discard both the passion and the language of it in amicable indifference together. Well, I will lose no time in preparing my proposals. [Exit.

Scene II.—Mr. Manly's.

Enter MISS MANLY.

Miss Man. Could I have suspected Welford of infidelity ! Happy, happy Miss Wingrove ! So vanish all my hopes !

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Y. Man. Emma, what means this agitation ? Whence these tears ? Is my mother well ? Where is my father ? —Speak, dear Emma.

Enter MRS. MANLY.

Mrs. Man. Oh, Harry, what uneasiness has your absence occasioned—why will you pay so little attention to your family ?

Y. Man. Dear madam, I deserve more reprehension than I ever meet with ; yet let me intreat your present forbearance. My heart, since last I saw you, has been torn by such a variety of anguish, that I have not

been master of my conduct.—But why is Emma thus uneasy?

Mrs. Man. Dear girl, I believe her uneasiness results from mine.—Could you have thought it, Harry? I scarce know how to tell you; but your father has seduced Miss Wingrove from her friends, where he has placed her I know not—but——

Y. Man. Thank heaven! then I have been truly informed, and she is with my father.

Mrs. Man. Thank heaven, Henry! Do you thank heaven that your father wrongs me? Your behaviour shocks me, Harry—it is even worse than his.

Y. Man. Dear mother, don't indulge such suspicions. My father steal Miss Wingrove from her friends!—No, no, indeed he did not: that she is with him, truly rejoices me.

Enter OLD MANLY.

Y. Man. Dear sir, where is Miss Wingrove? Where is my lovely Julia? Will she permit me to behold her face again?—Yet how dare I hope it.

O. Man. Ought I to permit you to behold my face again, sir? how dare you hope that? Instead of asking impertinent questions about what does not concern you, have the goodness to account for your own conduct, sir. You leave your family—fill them with apprehensions for your safety, and at your return, instead of meeting us with proper submission, you begin by hectoring your poor innocent father, and bullying him with a long string of saucy inquiries—“Where is Miss Wingrove? Where is my Julia?” [*Mimicking him.*] What have you to do with Miss Wingrove? Who made her your Julia?

Mrs. Man. Who, indeed! She is differently disposed of.

Y. Man. Dear sir, how could I possibly imagine, that what I said would give the slightest ground of

offence? The Larrons assured me she went away with you.

Mrs. Man. There, Mr. Manly, there! I am jealous now without a cause! I have no foundation for my suspicions!

Miss Man. Dear madam—dear sir!—hear me one moment: I can too certainly assure you where Miss Wingrove is.

Mrs. Man. Where, Emma, where?

Y. Man. Dear, dear Emma, tell me instantly. } *all at once.*

O. Man. Aye, let us hear child—let us hear it. }

Miss Man. The report we heard, madam, was too well founded: Miss Wingrove is indeed with Mr. Welford.

Y. Manly. With Welford!

Mrs. Man. Ridiculous child!—mere jealous apprehension.

Y. Man. Madam!

Mrs. Man. Ask your father, whose suspicions are the wildest, her's or mine—he can set you right at once, if he chooses it. But I'll stay no longer to endure such treatment.

O. Man. Don't, my dear, don't.

Mrs. Man. Your indifference, Mr. Manly, is even more injurious than your infidelity. [*Erit.*

O. Man. Before I go to appease your mother, who is as absurd as you are profligate, let me caution you, young man, how you practise such another frolic in a hurry—the wicked story that you have so ingeniously trumped up about my being at such a place as Larron's: this excellent joke, I say, sir, which owes all its genius to its being a falsehood, and its wit to the certain mischief it was sure to produce in your family, won't be passed over unpunished, I assure you. Have you no duty?—no regard for truth? But it was ever thus

with you, you prodigal! The best example I have ever been able to set you, either for truth or modesty, never produced the slightest effect upon your vile, impenetrable nature; and the mildest language, you rascal! was always thrown away upon you. *[Retires.]*

Y. Man. Dear Emma, unravel, if you can, this knot of perplexities: my father answers me with anger, my mother with tears, and you, my dear sister, start an idea, which is one of the last that would have entered my imagination; yet, being once presented, love will not suffer it to repose in idleness—Tell me, my Emma—Can Julia be with Welford? Can she—can he—can both be so inconstant?

Miss Man. Oh, Harry! why did I mention it—this may be the source of fresh affliction. Think, if it is so, that I endure enough, and do not increase my misery—you know my fears.

Y. Man. Lay them aside, dear Emma! be assured I shall act with moderation—I know I shall. Oh, Julia!—but you must tell me all you know respecting her and the villain—I will not name him that has stolen her from me. Come to my study, Emma; nay, dry your eyes—you shall see what an example of patience I will exhibit—I shall quarrel with no one but myself; for in myself alone is the foundation of all the miseries I am exposed to. *[Exeunt YOUNG MANLY and EMMA.]*

Enter SERVANT to OLD MANLY.

Serv. Miss Herbert, sir, desires to know if she can have the pleasure of half a minute's conversation with you. ●

O. Man. Show her in.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Enter MISS HERBERT.

O. Manly. This is indeed a kindness, my dear Miss Herbert; your visits are valuable in proportion to their rarity, like winter suns—or—or—no—like—

Miss Her. Never mind, my dear Mr. Manly, what they are like; we will settle the impromptu upon more mature deliberation another time.

O. Man. Egad, and so we will; for nothing requires so much time as an off-hand speech.

Miss Her. Now, sir, to the object of my visit.—Report says, that you have seen Miss Wingrove, and I am anxious to hear how the charming creature endures her misfortunes.

O. Man. Very true, madam; but where should I see Miss Wingrove?

Miss Her. Why, report does say, sir, that you met her at a place where it would have been equally for her happiness, and your reputation, that you had never met at all—at Mrs. Larron's.

O. Man. It's a falsehood—a confounded falsehood!—I go to Mrs. Larron's! But, dear Miss Herbert, how can a young lady of your candour and good sense give credit to such a thing, particularly when you had such good reason for disbelieving it, as its being the general report?

Miss Her. Why indeed, Mr. Manly, as you say, what should you do at such places? You know you are subsiding into the calm evening of life, when the tempestuous passions gently sink into a soft, undisturbed repose. I dare say, now, you feel this sweet cheerful twilight of your days to be attended with more substantial comfort, and much more real happiness, than the gaudier scenes of your meridian life, when every thing was brilliant, and nothing solid; every thing gay, but nothing rational. ●

O. Man. Twilight! Gadso!—none of your twilights neither, miss. This is the way—there is no such thing as purchasing impunity in this world for one offence, but by pleading guilty to a worse.—Well, miss, and suppose I was at Mistress Larron's?

Miss Her. [*Aside.*] O ho! I thought I should bring

him to confession; he will acknowledge any vice, but age—So, sir, you were there, then, after all.

O. Man. Gads life, ma'am! don't ask so many questions; I understand you well enough, miss—You would insinuate that I am a helpless old fellow—that you can see no great use in my living, and that the sooner I am hang'd out of the way, the better; but give me leave to tell you, madam——

Enter ADMIRAL CLEVELAND.

Adm. Hey day! what storm's a brewing now? Why, neighbour Manly, this is a rough gale upon so fair a coast—What! quarrelling with my niece?

Miss Her. Dear uncle! I'm quite rejoiced to see you—you never came so seasonably to the rescue of a poor little disabled frigate in your life.—Mr. Manly, here——

O. Man. Your niece is an impertinent, forward, malicious young woman, Mr. Cleveland; and I desire never to see her face again—I'll never, never forgive her—No, if I were to live till I was sixty.

Miss Her. What a formidable resentment! Why the period of it has expired these five years.

Adm. [*Aside.*] Leave him to me, I'll tease the old fellow—I came on purpose.

Miss Her. I will.

Adm. But how did the brush happen? What is the cause of it?

Miss Her. Why, sir, I spoke, I am afraid, somewhat too justly of your friend's age, and appeared to entertain too favourable an opinion of his morality—offences which a lively, determined rover, in his climacteric, can never reconcile to his forgiveness.

Adm. Oh, is that all?

Miss Her. So good, Mr. gallant, gay Lothario of sixty-five, a good morning to you. [*Exit MISS HERBERT.*

O. Man. A saucy minx.

Adm. Come, Manly, you have too many of the substantial afflictions of life to contend with at present, to be ruffled by little breezes of this sort—But I am your friend, and I thought it my duty as such to call upon you, and to do what a friend ought—to comfort you.

O. Man. Why that was very kind, my old neighbour, very kind indeed—Be seated, I beseech you.—Yes, indeed, 'tis very true, as you say, Admiral, I am a wretched, miserable, unhappy man! oppress'd with sorrows, laden with affliction—overtaken, before my time, by many cares. Yet 'tis something, my worthy neighbour, to have a trusty friend, to take a kind interest in one's misfortunes—to share, as it were, the sad load of life—to ride and tie with one in the weary pilgrimage—Oh, 'tis a charming thing to have a friend!

Adm. I think so, indeed, and hope to prove as much—I have no other object but to comfort you—none, none.—You are indeed very unhappy.

O. Man. Very, very!

Adm. Why there's your wife, now.

O. Man. Aye—my wife—Oh! oh! [*A long sigh.*]

Adm. Nay, be comforted, my friend—be comforted. Why she is of herself a sufficient load of misery for any one poor pair of mortal shoulders: always fretful, her suspicions never asleep—and her tongue, always awake, constantly making her observations, like a vessel sent out upon discovery—ever on the watch, like an armed cutter, to cut off any little contraband toy, and to intercept any harmless piece of smuggled amusement.

O. Man. Oh! 'tis dreadful, neighbour—quite dreadful, indeed!

Adm. Take comfort, my friend—What did I come here for? Take comfort, I say.—There is your son, too.

O. Man. Yes, my son, too, an abandon'd profligate!

Adm. Nay, if that were all, there might be hopes.

The early little irregularities that grow out of the honest passions of our nature, are sometimes an advantage to the ripened man; they carry their own remedy along with them, and, when remedied, they generally leave the person wiser and better than they found him—wiser for his experience, and better for the indulgence which they give him, towards the infirmities of others: but a canting, whining, preaching profligate—a sermon-maker at twenty—a fellow that becomes a saint before he's a man—a beardless hypocrite—a scoundrel, that cannot be content with common homely sinning, but must give it a relish by joining a prayer with it in his mouth! Of such a fellow there can be no hopes—no hopes indeed.

O. Man. None, none. Oh! miserable that I am, where will my affliction end? where shall I find consolation?

Adm. Consolation!—In me, to be sure! What else was the purpose of my visit?—I forbear to say any thing of your daughter—poor, unhappy girl!

O. Man. Conceal nothing from me. What has happened to my poor child—what has happened to her? She was my favourite. Miserable man! O miserable man!

Adm. Nay, if it will give you any comfort, I will tell you—it is my duty to do so. Why she, you know, was desperately in love with Charles Welford. He has turned her off, I find—discharged her the service, and has fallen in with somebody else; so that, I suppose, by to-morrow morning, we may look for her birth, poor girl! in the ambush of a willow, or the retirement of a fish-pond.

O. Man. Now the sum of my calamities is complete. [*Weeps.*] Now, indeed, the cup is full. Poor undone man—miserable husband—wretched father!

Adm. Aye, and all to come upon you at your time of life, too. Had your misfortunes reached you when

you were in the vigour of your days— [OLD MANLY dries his eyes, and looks resentfully.] —when you retained enough of bodily strength and force of mind to cope with them—but, at your time of day, when the timbers are approaching fast towards decay—when the lights of the understanding are upon the glimmer, and the reckoning of life is pretty nearly out—Oh! 'tis too horrible. Faith! after all, I don't know how to comfort you.

O. Man. [In a rage.] [Both rising.] I believe not, indeed; you fusty, musty, old, foul-mouthed, weather-beaten coxcomb—timbers approaching fast to decay! Whose timbers do you mean, old Jury-mast? Look at your own crazy hulk—do—and don't keep quoting your d—n'd log-book criticisms upon your juniors and your betters.

Adm. Nay, my good friend——

O. Man. D—n your friendship, and your goodness too. I don't like friendship that only wants me to hate myself—and goodness, that only goes to prove every thing bad about me. So, good Mr. Yellow Admiral, sheer off—do—and, till you can stuff your old vessel with a cargo of more commoditable merchandise, don't let me see you in my latitude again.

Adm. Sir, let me tell you, you may repent of this language; and were it not for pity of your age and your misfortunes——

O. Man. O curse your pity; and as for misfortunes, I know of none equal to your consolation.

Adm. You shall hear more of this, Mr. Manly.

O. Man. Not for the present, if you please.—If you want my life, take it—take any thing—only take yourself off.

Adm. Very well, sir. You shall hear from me at a proper time [Aside.] I have made the old fool nobly miserable; that's some comfort, however.

O. Man. [Solus.] What an ass was I, to listen so long

to the hollow croakings of this melancholy sea-monster—a rusty old weather-cock, always pointing one way, and that to the quarter of misfortune.—I miserable!—What should make me so? Is not my wife kind and faithful, and only a little troublesome now and then, for my good? Is not my son generous and gay, and—and like his father, as a son should be? And an't I stout in body, and sound in mind; and is not every thing as I would have it?—A dismal old —— Now has he given me a sample of the view with which advice is always bestowed, and I him a proof of the effect with which it is always taken—he came to me to increase my distresses by consolation, and I have made use of his counsel as a new argument for pleasing myself.

[Exit.

Scene III.—Miss Herbert's.

Enter MISS HERBERT and MRS. RACHEL.

Miss Her. Well, my dear aunt! have you been more successful in your inquiries after the unfortunate Miss Wingrove than I have been?

Mrs. Rach. I don't know how to say I have been more successful—but from your account, I have collected more particulars. I understand she was accidentally encountered by Mr. Welford, who kindly offered her the asylum of his house, which she accepted—but learning, by conversation with his relations, that her reception there had produced a quarrel between him and his mistress, the generous girl scorned to consult her own comfort at the expense of her protector; and having contrived to change her own clothes for those of a younger brother of Mr. Welford's, she accomplished her escape.

Enter SERVANT.

Mr. Wingrove, madam.

Miss Her. Admit him. O, he shall receive no mercy at my hands whilst he continues the persecutor of his sister.—Will you give me leave, madam, to receive him alone?

Mrs. Rack. Certainly, my dear.

[*Exit.*

Enter MR. WINGROVE.

Mr. Win. Will Miss Herbert permit a penitent to approach her?

Miss Her. Oh! by all means—a real penitent. But are you quite sure that you come under that description; or is your's like the common repentance of the world, which consists rather in a prejudice against punishment, than a sincere contrition for the offence?

Mr. Win. Dear, charming Harriet, how can you question it? I am ashamed of the violence of my behaviour at our last interview; yet you must acknowledge that you drew me into that suspicion by your ambiguous deportment. Surely my Harriet could not find entertainment in the uneasiness of the man who adores her?

Miss Her. [*Aside.*] Bless me! if he continues in this strain of humility, I shall never be able to punish him as he deserves—yet I must.

Mr. Win. What's that, my Harriet? You cannot doubt the sincerity and devotion of my love.

Miss Her. Apropos—Was it you that fell in love with me, or your father?

Mr. Win. My father! Harriet?

Miss Her. Aye, you or your father; which of you is it that I have had the good fortune to inspire with so favourable an opinion of me? I am inclined to think it is to the elder gentleman I owe the obligation.

Mr. Win. Nay, now, madam, I don't understand you.

Miss Her. In plain English, then, had you your instructions from your father to undergo the labour of wooing, or did you come of your own accord?

Mr. Win. Can my Harriet entertain so humiliating an opinion of me, as to suppose I would be actuated in so dear a concern as that by any influence but the impulse of my own affection?

Miss Her. Take care, Mr. Wingrove—take care—there is nothing so tempting, I admit you, as those pretty words that fall gracefully in to close the procession of an ambitious sentence; but let me ask you plainly, sir, Whether, if your father should now, even now, lay his commands upon you to relinquish the passion with which you affect to regard me, you would not instantly obey him, and leave me forsaken and forlorn, to transfer your obedient ardours to any new lady of his choice?

Mr. Win. 'Tis true, I feel the most sincere respect for my father; yet had he thought proper to interpose his influence in a case where nature claims a paramount authority, I had renounced a submission which I should have held to have been unjustly exacted.

Miss Her. Are you sure of it?

Mr. Win. Quite sure.

Miss Her. Dear Mr. Wingrove. [*Taking his hand.*]

Mr. Win. [*Kissing it.*] My lovely, my adorable Harriet!—Sure of it! am I sure of my existence? Am I sure of your being the most lovely of your own sex—or I the happiest of mine? [*Kisses her hand*] Am I sure that we shall never exchange another harsh word, or another unkind look? Am I sure——

Miss Her. Nay, now, sir, you are fairly caught.

Mr. Win. Hey-day! what frolic is in the wind now?

Miss Her. If all this be true, Mr. Wingrove, tell me, sir, what it is that constitutes the offence of your sister? Why is she driven out a disgraced wanderer, to encounter all the unknown hazards of a merciless world, when one of her persecutors not only acknowledges that he shares in all her guilt—if guilt it be—but glories in the sympathy he feels in her disobedience, be-

cause he considers it as a just tribute to the object of his affections, and a proof of his independence?

Mr. Win. My sister, ma'am, is a woman—and—and——

Miss Her. My sister, ma'am, is a woman—and—and—that is, my sister is an interdicted being—disinherited by nature of her common bounties—a creature, with regard to whom, engagements lose their faith, and contracts their obligations. In your fictitious characters as lovers, you endeavour to make us believe that we are exalted above human weaknesses; but, in your real characters, as men, you more honestly demonstrate to us, that you place us even below your own level, and deny us the equal truth and justice that belongs alike to all intelligent beings. This language, sir, is new, at least in the vocabulary of love; I wish I could say the sentiments it conveys were equally so in the hearts of your most imperious sex.

Mr. Win. Before I was interrupted, madam, by this torrent of modest rhetoric on the merits of your most unimperious sex; for so, in particular, I am bound to think them, I meant merely to have said, that I can aggrandize the woman with whom it may be my fate to be united—whereas, if my sister joined herself with an inferior, she would have become necessarily degraded to the rank of her husband. But I find, madam, these insults are calculated merely to gratify your pride, by proving to what extremity of meanness your power can reduce me. I blush at the servilities to which it has already exposed me, and now throw off the yoke for ever.

[*Going.*

Miss Her. Stay, sir; before you go, let me beg you to favour this letter with a perusal—read it at your leisure. And now—"a long farewell to all my greatness."

Mr. Win. D—nation! laughed at too!—Farewell, madam, and I swear——

Miss Her. Nay, sir, don't swear; or if thou wilt swear—swear by thy gracious self!

Win. [*In a fury of passion.*] Madam, I go—for ever. [*Exit.*]

Miss Her. To have convinced me of that, your congè, my rebellious captive, should have been taken with somewhat less disturbance. I am glad I had recollection enough to give him Lord Dartford's letter of proposals before he went. He was in a terrible rage, to be sure—so much the better—while a woman retains power enough over a man to make him lose his temper, he is not yet in that state of healthy indifference that entitles him to bid defiance to a relapse of affection. [*Exit,*

ACT V.

Scene I.—The Admiral's Garden.

Enter JULIA (in boy's clothes, looking back.).

Yonder is my brother, and his servant, as I live; perhaps in pursuit of me! I dare not meet them—Yet sure they cou'd not know me—I hardly know myself—Their eyes seem directed this way—I'll shut the gate till they have pass'd. Ha! who comes here? perhaps the owner of this place. From my long residence with my aunt, I am almost a stranger in my native village—Bless me, he has a stern countenance! I had best conceal myself till he quits the garden. [*Retires,*

Enter ADMIRAL.

Adm. Why what a pack of idle fellows I keep about me. When I'm laid up with the gout these rascals do nothing—See what a fine jessamine here is almost spoilt for want of tying up—let's try what I can do. [*Goes to tie it, Julia shifts her place.*] What's that shakes the

leaves so—Hey, is not that a man? Oh! oh! there's the way my nectarines fall so short. [*Goes and brings Julia forward.*] Here! here! no resistance—Come out, and let us see what we can make of you. Well, young graceless, and what do you do here? Come, let's hear what account you can give of yourself.

Julia. I do assure you, sir, I came in by accident.

Adm. By accident? Well that's a good beginning enough; what do you shut your eyes as you go along, that you can't tell the highway from an enclosure?

Julia. I mean, sir, I just stepp'd in to avoid a person I wish'd not to see me.

Adm. Very like, sir; but pray, sir, will you have the goodness to tell us who you may happen to be, sir?

Julia. Pray, sir, excuse me.

Adm. Indeed, sir, I shall do no such thing—Come, sir, who's your father?

Julia. I cannot tell you, indeed, sir.

Adm. Indeed, sir—Well, after all, it might puzzle a wiser head than your's to do that; but possibly you may have better luck with regard to your mother—who is she?

Julia. My mother, sir, is dead.

Adm. Dead, is she? But had she no name when she was alive? Egad you shuffle so, that I fancy you've been longer at the trade than I at first imagined. You're a gay spark for the profession too—If Rachel had been a young woman, I should have suspected something else; but perhaps the coat may have been stolen too; these gentry now-a-days think nothing they can get too good for them, and the finger is only an accomplice to the felonious pride of the back, “win gold and wear it”—Hey, is that your maxim, my young poacher? Gadso, now I remember, I have seen Sam. Welford in those very clothes—I shall secure you, my lad; you shall answer all this.

Julia. I beseech you, sir, not to expose me.

Adm. Not expose you—What! do you think I shall connive at felony? Here, Tom, Simon, Ralph—attempt to move, and you're a dead man. Here, will nobody help me to secure this villain?

Enter MRS. RACHEL and SERVANTS.

Adm. Here, seize that fellow, and tie his hands behind him—Keep off, Rachel, I dare say he has got pistols in his pockets—Lead him directly to a magistrate; I'll follow.

Julia. Dear madam, I implore you to plead for me to that gentleman—your looks speak benevolence—I entreat you, madam, to have pity on me!

Adm. There's a young artful dog now, beginning to coax and flatter Rachel about her good looks; aye, that's the way with these handsomer sprigs of the fraternity, they are sure to attack the women; but 'tis such a snivelling puppy—why hang it, my lad, you must expect these rubs in the way of your business, its only a misfortune in trade—Come, man, behave yourself a little more like a rascal of spirit.

Mrs. Rach. Brother, I entreat you to send your servants in.

Adm. Send 'em in, Rachel, why how's this? Do you want him to make his escape? Has he softened you with his whimpering? You know if he takes to his heels, I can't follow him.

Mrs. Rach. I have particular reasons for my request.

Adm. Well, be it so then—wait in the house till I call you. [*Exit SERVANTS.*] Don't you think to get off tho'—if you attempt to stir——

Julia. You may rely upon it, sir, I will not move. Oh, madam, may I hope that you will befriend me in this dreadful exigency?

Adm. No, no, my lad, you are dipping into the wrong pocket there; Rachel is not like most of her sex; to be

won over by wheedling, you do but fling away your skill. But why was I to dismiss those fellows, Rachel?

Mrs. Rach. Brother, if what I've already said has surpris'd you, I shall increase your astonishment still further, by desiring to have a short conversation with this stranger, while you walk aside.

Adm. What, leave you alone with a pickpocket, a housebreaker? I tell you, he has pistols in his pockets, or a swashing cutlass in his coat-lining! Rachel, Rachel, you are a poor ignorant woman, you can't tell what instruments these fellows may have about them.

Mrs. Rach. You are mistaken, brother, this is no robber, I am persuaded.

Adm. Oh Rachel, Rachel, is it come to this after all?—I did think for your sake, that there might be such a thing as a woman without folly or frailty; but you are determined that I shall not die with too favourable an opinion of your sex—for shame, Rachel, for shame—'tis too bad—too bad indeed.

Mrs. Rach. A few minutes will convince you, brother, that if I merited your good opinion before, I shall not be likely to forfeit it on the present occasion.

Adm. May be so, may be so, Rachel, it has an odd look however; have a care of yourself, old girl; if you should do a foolish thing, it won't be taken as if one of your prudes had been guilty of a little trespass, who prepare people for their fall, by the fuss they make about their virtue. You'll have a hot birth on't, my old lass, you will—but, however, mind I give you fair warning. [Retires.]

Julia. Dear madam, vouchsafe to hear my wretched story.

Mrs. Rach. As I know not what impression my brother's strange conjectures may have made on your opinion, suffer me to gain a little credit, by sparing you the trouble of informing me that you are Miss Wingrove.

Julia. Madam !

Mrs. Rach. Dear young lady, be not alarm'd at this discovery, for never was there more sincere commiseration than what your suff'rings have produced in me.

Julia. Oh, madam, how has my wretched situation been made known to you? and by what means may I obtain your friendship?

Mrs. Rach. I have but one condition to propose, and that is an unreserved communication of the circumstances that have involved you in this distress—that made, for I cannot admit an idea of criminality in you, I can assure you not only of my own protection, but my brother's; who is as warm in his attachments, as he is rash and hasty in forming conclusions from first appearances; but my brother returns; I would not meet him till I can inform him of the whole. This way, dear Miss Wingrove.

[Retire to an alcove.]

Enter ADMIRAL.

Adm. What isn't this tête-a-tête over yet? what, they retire at the sight of me—Oh! guilt! guilt! I'll observe you tho'—why she seems to be courting him! I'll be sunk if it isn't so—Aye, Rachel, now you have flung aside propriety, decency, I fancy, will soon follow. Women, I find, never love to do silly things by halves; when once they slip cable on a voyage of folly, let them bring them to that can. Particularly your reasoning sort of sensible, elderly gentlewomen—for when they have fairly passed the equinox of life, they know they sail with a trade wind, and the devil can't stop them, till they are snug in harbour with a yoke-fellow, after a tedious passage or difficult virginity. By all that's scandalous she takes his hand—Oh sit down, sit down, my gentle swain—Why he's weeping still—sink me if ever I saw such a watery-ey'd puppy. Not but there was something in his distress that moved me—if circumstances had not been so strong against him, &c.

should no more have taken him for a thief than for a sailor—What, must he have your smelling bottle too—why she has left him in the harbour, and comes this way—she looks as if she saw me too—can she face me? will she brazen out her folly? [*Mrs. RACHEL advances.*] Well, Mrs. Rachel Cleveland.

Mrs. Rach. Well, brother, I come to clear up all your doubts and difficulties.

Adm. Oh don't take so much trouble, madam, it is sufficiently clear already, I give you my word.

Mrs. Rach. Nay, then I perceive you are under your old mistake, so I shall explain all at once. This way, my dear. [*To JULIA.*]

Adm. My dear! by heaven that's too much—what, no shame, Rachel!

Mrs. Rach. Now learn your error, brother, and give me leave to recommend to your protection [*JULIA advances, Mrs. RACHEL takes her hand, the ADMIRAL going out in a rage.*] Miss Julia Wingrove.

Adm. What's that, Rachel! who did you say?

Mrs. Rach. This young lady, brother, whose misfortunes you have heard in part, is Miss Julia Wingrove; I am convinced she deserves your friendship, and it is evident she is much in need of it.

Adm. And she shall have it cost what it will. Young lady! why what a fool have I made of myself—Can you excuse an old fellow, madam, who frequently lets his hasty temper run away with his slow wits?

Julia. Your present kindness, sir, infinitely overpays the fears occasioned by your misconception.

Adm. You must seal my pardon, miss, by a salute, or I sha'nt think we are fairly reconciled. Rachel, I don't apologize to you, as I know your forgiveness is always close in tow of my repentance; but as for you, lady fair, since you have been forced upon my coast, they must fight through fire and water for you that drive you out to sea again.

Julia. Do not, I beseech you, sir, let your generous compassion for me lead you into danger; the bare idea of such a consequence would compel me to forego the comfort of your hospitable protection.

Adm. Oh, don't let your little fearful heart begin conjuring up vexations, it'll do me a great deal of good—make my blood circulate—I have been too long out of action—a vast while too long—I am mere still water—spoiling for want of motion—a little hurricane or two will shake me clear again. I want a bit of a storm for the quiet of my old days, and a little wholesome danger will promote the safety of my health, so away with your fears, my little light fing—'Sblood! I was getting on the old tack again.

Julia. But, dear sir.—

Adm. Do, Rachel, tell her what an obstinate old fellow I am, and that it is only wasting her ammunition to oppose me.

Mrs. Rach. There is so much generosity, brother, in the substance of what you say, that I have no inclination to dispute about the expression of it. Miss Wingrove, if you please, you shall lay aside this dress.

Julia. Gladly, madam.

Adm. Come, young lady, let me be your conductor; and they that can make prize of British beauty when under the convoy of a British admiral, must have more weight of metal about them than the whole bulk of your lubberly relations, saving your presence, in a body—so cheerly, my little angel—bear up—"Bless'd isle with beauty, &c." [*Singing.*] [Exeunt.]

Scene changes to Lord Dartford's House.

LORD DARTFORD and JENKINS.

Lord D. So this triumph of my attractions, as I had so naturally believed, was a sham after all—Death, how

dared this saucy baggage venture to set her pert wits on so hazardous a deception—but my turn may come, and if she should marry this bouncer Wingrove, and grow disgusted with him, which of course must be the case, it will be in vain that she turns her eyes to me, I assure her—But what's to be done in this affair?

Jen. Can't your lordship disown having sent any proposal to Miss Herbert?

Lord D. How can I do that; you delivered the letter, didn't you?

Jen. Yes, my lord, but he must be a very indifferent servant whose memory cannot fail him a little, for the advantage of his master.

Lord D. Well, we must consign that difficulty to the eclaircissement of time and better fortune—but in the interim this refusal of Miss Herbert's makes it of importance to recover this wandering nymph as soon as possible. Did Thomas, do you say, trace a young gentleman, resembling Miss Wingrove, to Admiral Cleveland's?

Jen. He did, my lord, and was almost certain it was herself.

Lord D. If it should prove so, and she obtains shelter there, I think it might be easy to watch for her in the garden, and steal her thence, but first the admiral must be watched out though—remember that;—there may be danger else,

Jen. That's one of the cases, my lord, in which my memory never fails me.

Lord D. Well then, let's about it instantly—If I could meet with the lady, there is no harsh treatment to her that the old baronet will not interpret into respect for him; and as for the swaggerer, his son, let him know of my attempt upon his mistress, when I am married to his sister, with all my heart—Decency will prevent him from killing me then, and as for his opinion, as that is innocent of any effect upon the body, we must endeavour to endure it.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.—Miss Herbert's.

Miss Her. I don't know how it is, but I feel a sort of uneasiness about me, as if something had happened to vex me. What can it be? forgetful creature that I am—Miss Wingrove's distresses, to be sure. Yet that is not a novelty at the present moment; and then the persevering absurdity of her lofty brother—ha! ha!—Sits the wind in that quarter? Well, I can't help it. I am afraid he is not quite indifferent to me; yet I must tame him out of this unreasonable haughtiness before marriage, that he may be entitled to the just pride of a husband when he becomes one.

Enter WINGROVE.

Bless me, how came you here?—Always stealing upon one!

Win. I am so truly asham'd, madam—I cannot——

Miss Her. Come, sir, there is an eloquent humility in your manner that speaks for you. I have once before to-day construed your meaning; and I begin to flatter myself I shall not be a less faithful interpreter now, when I suppose that you are indeed a penitent for the treatment to which you have expos'd your sister.

Win. Indeed, indeed, I am so.

Miss Her. I am rejoic'd to hear it. You have read the letter I gave you?

Win. I have, madam.

Miss Her. Well, in all this wide world of caprice and uncertainty there is but one thing infallible.

Win. What is that?

Miss Her. That!—Why that a man of rank never violates his plighted honour, and that birth involves in it every human virtue.

Win. Perfidious scoundrel—I'll tear him piecemeal.

Miss Her. Tear your own prejudices from your heart, Mr. Wingrove.

Win. They are gone, madam ; and I have no other proof that they ever had an existence in my bosom, but the mortified sensibility which they have left behind them.

Miss Her. Come, sir, keep up your spirits ; you will do charmingly, I am convinc'd.

Win. Nay ; I am not now a convert to your opinion, my Harriet.

Miss Her. What, a relapse ?

Win. No, I only mean to say, this is not the first time of my life in which I have thought as you do. Reason has had many ineffectual struggles with prejudice in my mind upon this subject before. But, henceforth, I disclaim all reverence for such idle superstitions—I despise birth, and all the vanities which attend it.

Miss Her. Now, Mr. Wingrove, I do not think so well of your case as I did. I am, myself, no peevish, morose caviller at birth. It is always graceful, and often useful ; when it operates as a motive to a kind and honourable emulation with the illustrious dead ; but when those who possess the advantage, endeavour to make it a substitute for every other excellence, then indeed I think the offender is entitled to no gentler sentiment than my contempt, or my pity.

Win. My Harriet shall, from this time, regulate my opinions in every thing—and now may I hope——

Miss Her. Not now, not now !—Go home and be upon the watch to avail yourself of the first opportunity to reconcile every thing. Let this be the first probation of your recovery ; and if, when next we meet, I should find matters in a way that promises general happiness, perhaps I may not be so cruel to myself as to deny you the civility of partaking in it.

Win. Charming Harriet!

[*Exeunt separately.*]

Scene IV.—The Admiral's Garden.

Enter MRS. RACHEL, WELFORD, and YOUNG MANLY.

Mrs. Rach. Excuse me, Mr. Manly, Miss Wingrove's feelings have been lately too much agitated for me to suffer her to be exposed to new conflicts.

Y. Man. Madam, I came here to satisfy my anxious doubts about Miss Wingrove's safety; being once assured of that, I resign myself to the despair I have so justly merited. [*Walks off.*]

Wel. Nay—but, madam, don't let your generous compassion for the fair sufferer entirely prevail over the penitent misery of the offender—let them but meet, and leave the rest to chance.

Mrs. Rach. Well, sir, if I can prevail, Mr. Manly shall see Miss Wingrove—but let him understand I will not have her urged upon any point, and the length of the interview must be entirely left to her own pleasure and discretion.

Wel. It shall, madam—I engage for his obedience in every thing. [*Exit* MRS. RACHEL.] Come, Manly, throw away your despair. Mrs. Cleveland is gone to bring in your Julia.

Y. Man. Call her back, I beseech you. I dare not meet my injured love—Call her back, I intreat you; though I feel this kindness from you, Welford, with double force, after my late behaviour to you—how could I suspect you?

Wel. No more of that—here she comes without my trouble, and with her—shall I send them back?

Enter MRS. RACHEL and JULIA.

[*As soon as they see each other* MANLY kneels, and JULIA reclines on MRS. RACHEL.]

Y. Man. Oh! Julia.

Julia. Mr. Manly!

Y. Man. Oh! my lov'd Julia, I dare not approach

you; yet let me survey that form, where every virtue claims its own impression. Let me see anger aggravated by sweetness, and justice in her most awful form, invested in all the terrors of offended beauty. Look on me but whilst I describe the agonies I have endured for your sufferings, and the pangs I have undergone for my inexpressible guilt. I do not expect to be forgiven—only say you will endeavour not to hate me; and I go, my Julia—if you will have it so, for ever.

Julia. Mr. Manly, I cannot very easily hate—nay, sir, I even forgive you—but if your hopes, (which I can hardly suppose) should exceed this prudent limit, they deceive you.

Wel. Come, Miss Wingrove, let me hope you will consider this matter. I will not press it now—but—

Julia. My obligations to you, sir, have been important indeed; but this is not a topic even for the claims of gratitude. Mr. Manly, I am sure, will not oppose the only plan of comfort that is left me—a quiet, peaceful seclusion.

Y. Man. No, my Julia, no—never will I disturb your repose.

Julia. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Cleveland; but indeed I am not well.

Mrs. Rach. Be seated, my dear. I intreat you to take your leave for the present, gentlemen.

Y. Man. Rascal that I am!

[*Exeunt* MANLY and WELFORD.

Mrs. Rach. Keep up your spirits. I'll step into the house and fetch something for your relief, my dear. [*Exit.*

Julia. I am sorry, madam.

Enter LORD DARTFORD and JENKINS, with SERVANTS behind.

Lord D. There she is—and alone, by all that's lucky. Lose no time. You are sure the admiral is not at home?

Jen. Quite sure, my lord.

Lord D. Very well; lose no time; advance.

[*They seize JULIA.*

Julia. What means this rudeness?—Help! help! Oh help me, or I am lost.

Re-enter MANLY, WELFORD, and MRS. RACHEL.

Y. Man. My Julia's voice! [*JENKINS runs away.*

Lord D. Take care, Mr. Manly—We are well armed—take care, I say.

Y. Man. Dastardly villain—a pistol!

[*Strikes it out of his hand.—The DARTFORD party escape.*

How is my Julia?—Thank heaven, that has afforded me an opportunity of being serviceable to her in any thing!

Wel. How fare you, madam?

Julia. Much beholden, gentlemen, to you both; but weary of this life of alarms and rescues.

Enter ADMIRAL'S SERVANT.

Serv. Your father, Sir William, madam, is within, inquiring for you.

Julia. I will intrude upon you so much further as to lead me to my father instantly.

Y. Man. To your father!—Must it be so, Julia?

Julia. Do not oppose my request, Mr. Manly; I am resolved to throw myself upon his mercy.—My misfortunes may have softened him. Will you be kind enough, madam, to accompany me? I shall need your friendly offices.

Mrs. Rach. Miss Wingrove may command me in any thing.

Y. Man. Come then, my Julia, and let me deliver you up to that father from whose capricious cruelty I so lately thought to have given you a happy and a lasting freedom.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene V.—The Admiral's House.

Enter SIR WILLIAM, MISS JULIA, MRS. RACHEL, YOUNG MANLY, and MR. WELFORD.

Sir Will. I am overjoyed at your safety, Julia; but yet your leaving me——

Mrs. Rach. Nay, Sir William, if the step your daughter took was imprudent, who forced her to it? Who was it that compelled her to seek an uncertain refuge among strangers?

Sir Will. 'Sdeath, madam, what had my conduct to do with her disobedience? 'Tis true, Lord Dartford's proposals to Miss Herbert render him unworthy my alliance; but is not this man a plebeian—a fellow of yesterday?

Wel. Here, sir, you must allow me the liberty of observing, that Mr. Manly's recent services to your daughter, which you have just heard, merit a more liberal return.

Sir Will. That's very true, indeed—very true—I am sorry, indeed. I beg you ten thousand pardons, upon my word, sir.

Enter MR. WINGROVE.

Win. Where, where is she? *[Runs to JULIA.]*

Sir Will. 'Gad, I must retrieve my dignity in time, or William will be in a tremendous fury—I say, sir, for any thing I know, you may be a very good sort of person, but you will excuse me if I decline disgracing my family by a connection with one of your condition.

Win. What's that?

Sir Will. I say, young gentleman, you have done my family a service—I acknowledge it—I am grateful for it—but——

Win. Nay, sir, now let me interpose. I have long been sensible of Mr. Manly's merits, and have placed myself in the way of the accomplishment of his wishes

from causes, which at this moment I feel no delight in contemplating.

Sir Will. Why, what's all this? Why, William, is it you?—Are you sure it is you?

Win. If identity depends upon the mind, sir, I glory in saying it is not—but, permit me to tell you, sir, we have been too long unjust to the merit of Mr. Manly, and to the preference of the unhappy Julia—besides, sir, after what has happened it will be necessary, even to the pride of your house, that an immediate union should take place between Julia and Mr. Manly.

Sir Will. Well, if the necessity of the case forbids the possibility of a choice, I desire it to be understood—I give my free consent.

Y. Man. Do you hear this, my Julia? Pardon me; but can I be blamed if I am astonished into audacious hope?

Julia. Do not, Mr. Manly, renew a solicitation that may tend to plunge me into the guilt of disobedience a second time.

Enter OLD MANLY, MISS MANLY, and MISS HERBERT.

O. Man. Mrs. Cleveland, you will excuse an impatient set of people who have too much affection for that inconsiderate fellow there, but hearing something of a skirmish here, in which he had borne a part, we could not resist a kind of curiosity to know the particulars. I would have come by myself, but though my wife was too much frightened to be able to stir abroad, my daughter was too much alarmed to be able to stay at home, and so here we are together.

Win. You are heartily welcome, sir, and I hope we shall all be better friends before we part.

Wel. [To MISS MANLY.] Dare I hope, now, that my Emma has dismissed her doubts?

Miss Man. Name them not, dear Mr. Welford, I beseech you,

Enter ADMIRAL CLEVELAND.

Adm. Why, Hollo, Rachel!—What's all this? There was I gone to attend the examination of that smuggling dog Larron, and the woman he lives with, for receiving stolen goods, when in comes a hue and cry after me, with a Canterbury tale of your being run away with—I confess I did not give much credit to that part of the story, because thinks I, an old maid, whatever may be the value of her lading, is a sort of neutral vessel, that all nations, to do them justice, hold very sacred from attack. I am glad to see you all at my house. Well, Sir William, may an old seaman, who boasts no larger store of arms than the short allowance which nature gave him, presume to strike hands with a man whose ancestry bore command while Noah was a midshipman, eh!

Sir Will. I don't very well understand the intention of your speech, admiral, but your kindness to my daughter spoke a language that could not be misinterpreted. I hope you'll excuse our breaking in upon you in this manner.

Enter O'DONNEL.

Who sent for you, sir?

O'Don. An plase your honour they have secured the smart little gantleman below, that made such a dirdum about miss—and we want to know what your honour intends to do wid him? Whether your honour wou'd give him de liberty to be set in de stocks, or wou'd like better that he shou'd take a pritty little walk in de horsepond, your honour.

Sir Will. Who is it the fellow means?

Y. Man. Lord Dartford, I suppose.

Win. Oh, let him go—[*Exit O'DONNEL.*] you cannot punish him—he is above your ridicule—for he is below your contempt.

O. Man. But, I say, admiral——

Adm. Well, my friend.

O. Man. I was only going to say, that as this lord cannot but feel himself at this juncture in a sort of an awkward kind of a taking, it would be good-natured in you, and I am sure very agreeable to the company, to go to him and give him a little of your comfort—he's only vex'd now at his disappointment—but go to him, worthy admiral—do—and console him into perfect misery.

Adm. Nay, my worthy friend, no more of that, I beseech you, it was only a small splice of fore-castle merriment—the last faculty an old seaman parts with is a little sort of a sneaking fondness for a joke—and as it is often the only comfort that sticks to him after a life of service, it would be hard to deprive him of that.

O. Man. So, when you are no longer fit for duty, you kindly turn the hulk into a tender, and make it a crazy receptacle for forced jokes, and pressed witticisms. Well, I forgive you.

Adm. [*To OLD MANLY.*] Thank you, thank you—and now, Manly, I give you joy.

O. Man. Eh!—what—joy!—I entreat you my good friend—joy from you—

Adm. Nay, I am serious now—I heartily congratulate on the approaching happiness, I hope, of this wicked, honest fellow of a son of your's—the conduct of this lord has brought him into the wind of my favour again—well, they may say what they will about the degeneracy of the times, and the falling off of our morals, and all that; but, to my thinking, we improve in every thing except in fighting, and in that, though we may equal, d—n me, if we can better, the good old model of our forefathers. I remember in my younger years, there were some few scattered remnants of such chaps as his lordship—some remains of your old school of beaux, who had been the insects of the former century, and which I had hoped were all extinct by this time; who, like him, were showy and dangerous, fitter for manœuvring than action, and more gaudy in their

tackle, than sound in their bottom—whereas, for ought I see, the striplings of these days, like this pickle Manly, have all the gaiety of their predecessors, with not a quarter of their foppery; and with less vice in their hearts, have more nature in their follies.

[MISS WINGROVE *advances.*

Julia. I can deny nothing, madam, to the kind eloquence of such an advocate, the more so, when all powerful as it is, it receives some small assistance, I fear, from the persuasions of my own heart—and now, Manly, may a poor, persecuted fugitive hope at last for a happy asylum from the severities of her fortunes? Shall I trust myself again to the precarious direction of so fickle a guide? Yes, I will trust, most confidently trust thee, for where there is generosity as the foundation of virtue in a man's nature, the memory of a woman's sorrows will secure her against a repetition of the cause of them, nor with such a mind, can her affection fondly bestowed ever be quite hopeless of a return.

Y. Man. Dearest Julia, I will not injure either my gratitude, or my love, by any attempt to convey them through the feeble vehicle of words—let my life speak the sincerity of my repentance, and the homage of my devoted affection: and as for that vice in particular which has protracted my happiness, and, but for the generous kindness of your brother, might have intercepted it for ever, I renounce it to the end of my life—I abjure it—no never shall I offend by intemperance again. Unless——

Julia. Unless, Manly!

Win. Unless, Mr. Manly!

Y. Man. Unless one favouring smile from this company should hurry us all into an unexpected excess—an intemperance of HONEST GRATITUDE.

END OF VOL. II.

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